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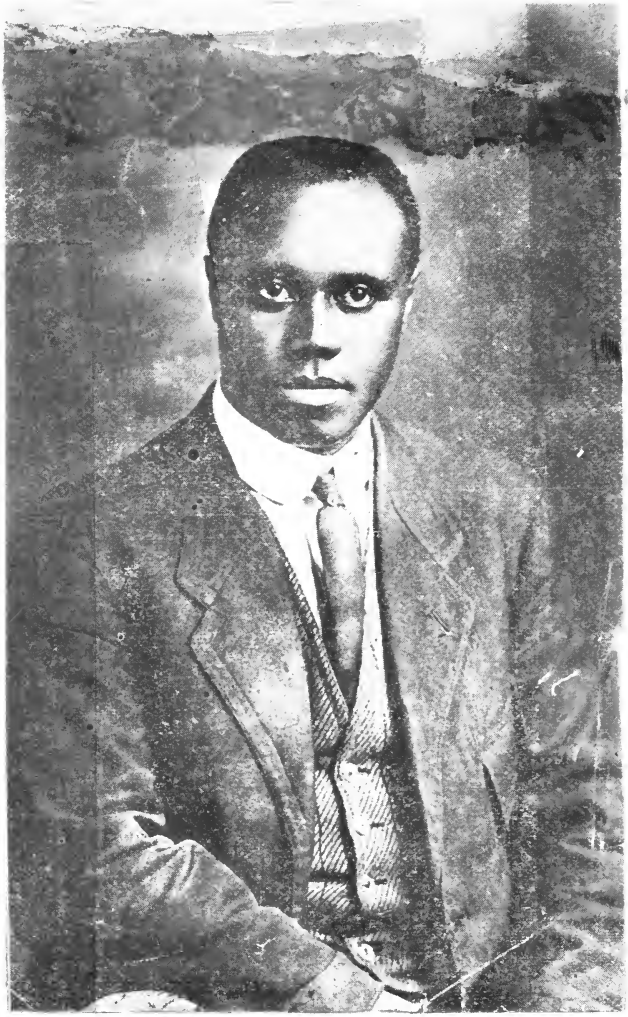

Otis M. Shackelford

Seeking the Best

DEDICATED TO THE NEGRO YOUTH

An Autobiography, Entertaining, Instructive, and Inspiring. Ten chapters of True Stories and Interesting Episodes in the life of the Author. Bits of History in Verse, or a Dream of Freedom Realized. A Poem modeled after the style of Hiawatha, depicting the life and sufferings of the Negro from the time he was brought to American shores until he had obtained his freedom at the close of the Civil War. Essays and Poems, charming in arrangement, beautiful and instructive in thought, full of wholesome advice to all. A credit to literature, and worthy of a place on the shelves of any library

ALL IN ONE VOLUME

FIFTH EDITION

BY

OTIS M. SHACKELFORD, A.B.

ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT TAYES

KANSAS CITY, MO.
BURTON PUBLISHING CO.
1911

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INTRODUCTION.

On the 15th of March, 1895, I had scribbled some verses about the burning of the old Lincoln Institute building and handed them to the editor of the *Evening Courier,* with whom I was acquainted, for correction. And fancy my surprise when the next evening the following article appeared:

"Jefferson City is deservedly famous for the intellectual attainments of her people generally and individually. But she can now boast of a production to which no other city in this section of the country can make a claim. The writer is a Negro and a student of Lincoln Institute. He is accomplished in Greek, Latin, German, and the English language. He is an ardent devotee of the Muse, and the verses printed below are a fair illustration of his genius."

Perhaps the above article and the poem, which will be found in another part, give the impression that I am somewhat of a scholar and poet. I lay no special claims to scholarship or an ability to write verse. But I am a lover and a "would-be"

promoter of literature, realizing as I do its ethical value and its effect upon the culture, refinement, and education of a people; realizing as I do that we are in great need of a literature and history, that our deeds and achievements are being neglected and obliterated by a relentless past, and that if someone does not come to the rescue and perpetuate our memory in letters, our past will indeed be a thing of the past. We must have poets to sing of our deeds, and we must have historians to record them.

It is unfair and unreasonable for us to expect men of the other race to do this. They have not the time. They need their brain and intellect for other things. Their emotions and feelings do not run in this direction. John Greenleaf Whittier, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Wendell Phillips, and others of that school, have long since been dead. We are left alone to tell our own tales of woe and to sing our own songs of gladness. We cannot longer afford to neglect or to set aside the cultivation of literature.

We should begin at once to teach our children how essential it is to the culture and refinement of a people. We should look around about our school-rooms into the innocent little faces that are peering angelically into ours, and there see

if we can discover some Emersons, Shakespeares, Miltons, Bryants, or Tennysons *in embryo*. If we should find one child with latent literary power, one child with poetic inspiration, as it were, it is our duty to interest ourselves in him, nurse him and foster that spirit within him; for the value of one such to the race and to the world cannot be over-estimated.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

This may be true of some of the little folk we meet in our school-rooms daily. We would not have them grow up as "mute inglorious Miltons"; we would not have them "waste their sweetness on the desert air." We need their services. Our race is in great need of such talent, and our posterity for a history is dependent upon it.

Such it is, my friends, that brings forth this tedious yet pleasing effort on my part. And though I have some doubts as to the perfection of thought and precision of diction, I find no small degree of pleasure in presenting it. And though it may be ignored and severely criticised

by some, though its sales may not net one penny of gain, and though in future years I may not be permitted to add to it or write another, I shall go down to the "tongueless silence of the dreamless dust" happy and proud in the thought of having contributed, though imperfect it may be, one small volume to the literature of my race.

THE AUTHOR.

"A Poet in Embryo."

FOREWORD TO FOURTH EDITION

We desire at this time to thank the generous public for the liberal support it has given the book "Seeking the Best," since its first appearance. The people seem to be looking for just such a work as we are offering.

Everywhere in our travels during the past year we have met with a success that did not at first seem possible. And people and papers of our own and other races who are able to criticise and judge, have encouraged and inspired us to go on in the needful work. We can but feel proud when we realize the good that is being done through our publication for the youth of our own race.

We are told that often entire programs of schools and literary societies are made up from the contents of this book. That the lessons of patience and perseverence taught are firmly fixed in youthful minds and hearts. That the author is a real benefactor to his race, and deserves much credit for the labor and skill wrought in his work.

We feel that the continued success and prosperity of the book demands the publication of this Fourth Edition. So "Seeking the Best" appears again for the fourth time.

Yours with thanks,

THE AUTHOR.

FORWARD TO THE FIFTH EDITION

"Seeking the Best" continues to prosper, and it gives us much pleasure to present this, the fifth edition of the book revised and illustrated. With new features we are sure that it will be hailed as heartily by an approving public in the future as it has been in the past. Being a creation purely original, conceived in the brain of a colored writer, and pictured by the skillful hand of a colored artist, it is readily seen to be in many respects unique. So rare a combination commands immediate attention, and naturally meets the approval and appreciation of all lovers of literature and art.

We are indebted to the young and talented artist, Mr. Grant Tayes, for the pen sketches found in the book. He is a genius in his work, and no doubt will some day find the place which he deserves in the artistic world.

We cannot praise him too highly or do too much to encourage him in this great work of uplift.

Again we extend thanks to patrons for past favors.

Yours truly,

—THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I.

My Little White Companion.

I was born on the 26th day of March, 1871, in the town of Tipton, in central Missouri; a place with less than two thousand inhabitants, and a place where, on account of its smallness of size, the social distinctions, especially among the boys of Anglo-Saxon lineage and Negro decent, were not so tightly drawn as they were in the larger towns of the Middle West. Hence, at a very early age, I formed an acquaintance with one of my little white neighbors, which later, by constant association, grew into the warmest friendship. We became boon companions, and were almost constantly in each other's company when we were not at school or doing chores at our respective homes. I loved him, and I am quite sure that he thought more of me than he did of any other boy, regardless of color, in the town. But, unlike Mr. Dubois, who, in "The Souls of Black Folk," writes of his early life among children of the other race,, and who became shocked and

very much grieved on account of the sudden dawning of this awful truth, as he seemed to think it, that there were distinctions on account of color, I always knew of racial differences and conducted myself accordingly, and so was saved from much humiliation along this line. And right here permit me to say that the reference to my association with children of the other race is original with me; that long before "The Souls of Black Folk" was published, and when "Seeking the Best" was a mere dream, I had conceived the idea of weaving the name of my little white companion into the threads of this my life story which I am about to relate.

As I have said before, we played together almost constantly, to the exclusion of all others; and after a day of romping and roaming through forests, wading through streams, swimming in ponds, fishing in creeks, killing frogs and snakes, gathering fruits and flowers, playing ball or marbles, robbing birds' nests, and amusing ourselves in a hundred other ways known only to boys, we would at last, when the day was over and the sun had hid itself behind the western hills, tired from our daily pleasures and pastimes, hie ourselves to some soft spot or comfortable place for rest and repose. There our minds would revert to

"We played together almost constantly to the exclusion of all others."

the more serious things of life, and we would discuss the future and try to make choice of the most desirable trades and professions, and tell what we intended to do or be when we grew up. It is perhaps this part of our association which in after years has impressed me most, and which has made it necessary for me to refer to my little companion in writing this, the early history of my life.

I was always a proud, ambitious, high-minded child, and felt myself as good and as mentally capable as any boy of the other race, my little companion not excepted. But he was a few months older than I, and knew many things, owing to his home training and environments, that I had no way of knowing. Without reflecting on my own raising, it is only fair to say that my companion lived in a home of culture and refinement and had everything he could wish for in the way of books and music and instructive games and toys. He had two sisters and a brother, and a Presbyterian father and mother, who idolized their children and studied daily for their happiness and amusement. While I was of an independent nature and was the physical master of my companion, my character was not strength-

ened by the above-named advantages, which mean so much in the early life of a boy or girl. My home, though, was somewhat better than that of the average Negro at that time; my father, being a preacher and a teacher, possessed many good books, but not for young minds, and he talked education almost constantly. However, on account of the advantages my companion had over me, I was unconsciously led and influenced by him, and would believe almost anything that he would tell me. On those occasions when we would have serious discussions as to our future lives, I was very often made to feel discouraged on account of the lowly condition of my race. My little companion, by misrepresentation, had led me to believe that there was no dignity in it or bright future for it. If I should venture some great achievement for myself in a high school or college, he would set me back by saying, "Colored people [he had too much respect for me to say "niggers"] do not have colleges." If I should speak of owning a big store some day, or of venturing out upon commercial seas, he was ever ready with the response, "Colored people do not have stores." If I should aspire to be a doctor, a lawyer, a dentist, or any one of the professions, my ardor was always dampened by the

above expression. According to my little companion, there was no dignified labor or calling for Negroes. I could not argue the question with him, for I had no proofs. This, in the light of all his great possibilities, made me feel very, very sad indeed.

I was always a great lover of music, and on one occasion, while myself and white companion sat listening to the sweet strains of the village band, I ventured to assert that when I got to be a man, I was going to join a band and make some sweet music too. My companion promptly responded with his ever-ready reply, which was always as a dagger in my heart, "Colored people do not have bands." The thrust this time seemed to hurt me worse than ever before, and I soon left him; but he never knew the reason why. A few weeks after this incident, arrangements for a big colored picnic were made; many visitors were to be in town, and fancy my delight when it was announced that the Lexington colored band had been engaged to furnish music for the occasion. When the day came, my heart was made to leap for joy; for sure enough, there was a real Negro band, dressed in uniform, with drums and horns, playing just as sweetly and executing even better than our own village band. I was de-

lighted. This, indeed, was a balm poured over the deep wound inflicted by my little white companion. Though I never twitted him or said a word to him about it, I was satisfied that he did not know everything regarding the possibilities of my race. I reasoned further, that if he were mistaken in this one instance, it was possible for him to be mistaken in all the rest of them.

I related the band incident to my mother, and she, having a broader view and more knowledge concerning these things than either of us, pointed out many instances of Negro superiority and skill, and I became satisfied that somewhere in this broad land there were Negro lawyers, doctors, musicians, bankers, college professors, and skilled laborers just as competent as those of the other race. This bit of information soothed my feelings and made the prospects seem brighter for me.

I never discussed these questions with my companion again, for I realized that he had prejudice in his heart, and I pride in mine, and though we were only children of tender years, such discussions only caused a bitterness which would poison friendship. I did not want this done, as we had spent many happy hours together and I did not see any reason why we should not

"When the day came my heart was made to leap for joy; for sure enough there was a real Negro band."

continue to do so, provided we steered clear of this subject, which grated on our sensibilities. But, as we grew older, we began naturally to drift apart and were seen together less often. Finally he was old enough to take a place in his father's store, and I went to work in a barber shop.

We would meet on the streets sometimes, exchange a few words, and pass on to our respective duties. But I knew in my heart that our close intimacy and friendship was nearly at an end.

CHAPTER II.

In the Barber Shop.

I went to work in the barber shop, and while there learned many things that I never knew before. This shop was the headquarters for gossip of all sorts, from a baseball game to a village scandal. No subject, however insignificant, was left undiscussed. It was by no means an ideal place for a fourteen-year-old boy, but it was the best I could do. I endeavored to catch and store away all the useful things I could hear, and to pay no heed to the frivolous or unbecoming. One of the best things for me was that the village orchestra, of which my uncle was leader, held its rehearsals there; and I, being a lover of music, handled the instruments, when the barbers were away, and by observation and close attention to all that was said regarding scales, chords, keys, range and scope of instruments, was soon able to play on any of them and take part in the orchestra rehearsals. This accomplishment I found to be useful to me in after years.

I read the daily papers, and thus kept in touch with everything worth while that was going on in the world. There was always deep down in my heart a desire to be somebody and to do something worthy in the world; and often there in the shop, while others were telling big tales and discussing vain and frivolous subjects, my mind, rapt in silent meditation, was planning how to reach a broader plane, how to ascend to a higher life.

You have no doubt, dear reader, heard the story of the eaglet that by some mischance was hatched out with a brood of chickens. One day, while eating and scratching around in the barnyard, he heard high up in the sky a scream or cry. The cry was that of an American eagle, and though the eaglet had never heard it before, he recognized it as a call to come up out of the barnyard. He was never again content to live in the barnyard with the chickens. Day by day he gained strength and his pinions developed, and one day, while playing about in the barnyard with his companions which were unlike himself, he heard that cry again. He responded this time, lifting his pinions, he raised himself to the fence, then to the barn, and, looking about with sharp eagle eyes, he took an upward flight, and began to

soar higher and higher, penetrating farther and farther into the blue canopy of the heavens, seeking his kind. He had answered the call. While in this shop I heard the call, "Come up out of the barnyard," and the one absorbing question with me was, how to answer this call.

For two years I remained in this shop with agreeable surroundings, but unhappy and dissatisfied, and I wondered when and how it all would end; for end it must I was quite sure. And one day it all did end, abruptly and unexpectedly.

CHAPTER III.

My Father's Lecture.

It was in the beginning of the month of September, in the year 1889, that my father, who was making preparations to go off and teach school, called me in and proceeded to give me a lecture, as he usually did on such occasions when he was leaving home.

'Tis true that I was a boy who greatly loved out-door sports and amusements, and had spent many and many a day, not even taking time to eat my meals, in satisfying my intense desires along this line. And while I never missed a day from school, and was always bright and apt in my books, and would never attend rowdy gatherings and church festivals, I wasn't the best boy in the world. I would spend many idle hours standing around a gang of bad boys, watching them play cards or throw dice, though I would never indulge myself. Besides, these fellows thought quite a deal of me, and respected me too much to ask me to take part in any of their games where

gambling was involved. They knew that I was a good fellow, and very often, when in trouble, would seek my counsel. I would always try to set a good example. I knew how far to go in mischief, and would stop when the limit was reached.

So, when my father called me in and lectured me in such a manner as he did, I was very much hurt and my heart was filled with resentment; for I was doing the very best I could, considering my environments and chances in a town like Tipton. He said many things which grieved me, and concluded with the climax that I was of no account and never would be. I said nothing. My heart was too full to explain or in any way try to vindicate myself. In this condition he left me and went away, to begin his school the following Monday morning. I brooded over what he said to me the rest of the day, and that night I concluded that ere he should return at the end of the week I would be gone. I had a very independent spirit, which he himself had bequeathed to me at birth.

My father and I had been talking over the matter of attending school somewhere for two or three years, without reaching any definite conclusion; my father always saying, as the time for

preparation approached, "Well, you had better wait another year." So, smarting under the severe tongue-lashing that he had given me, I determined to take the matter of going off to school into my own hands, and, calling one of my boy friends to me, I told him of my intention. He asked me when I was going, and added that he would go along with me for company. I was glad of his offer, for I had never been away from home, and I knew my companion could be of much service to me, for he was a newsboy, bootblack, and apple-peddler, and knew a great deal about travel, having "bummed" his way to Kansas City and St. Louis numbers of times.

On this dignified occasion, however, it was not our intention to beat our way, but we would go down on the local freight. My companion knew the conductor, and he thought we could talk him into giving us a free ride to Jefferson City, as that would be our destination. Thus we agreed, and the next morning I told my mother that I was going to Jefferson City to hunt a place to work and go to school. She tried to persuade me not to go until my father returned at the end of the week; but my mind was made up, and off I started.

Myself and companion boarded the train and

we pulled out; as we had anticipated, the conductor was kind to us and allowed us to make the trip free of charge. In return for his kindness, we sang what songs we knew for him, and my companion danced a jig, and the conductor was well pleased with our entertainment.

We reached Jefferson City late in the afternoon, and walked around for some time in quest of a place to spend the night. Finally, a friendly man directed us to the Institute, telling us to see President Page. We went as directed, and after we had gone quite through the girls' dormitory and peeked in nearly all of the rooms, someone took us in charge and escorted us to the President's office. The President was kind, and asked if we had had supper, to which we replied that we had, though we had not. He then told us to go over to the boys' dormitory and a teacher would give us lodging for the night. We did so, but had to sit around for some time before anything was done for us. Finally, at a very late hour, a teacher assigned us to our rooms.

I had hoped that myself and companion could spend the night together, but not so. I was sent to be the bed-fellow of one who was in the Senior class. He was large of statue, very dark in complexion, and not good-looking, but fine in conver-

sation and charming in personality. He seemed to be steeped in knowledge. From that one night's association I observed that he was very popular and seemed to be somewhat of a dictator. I found out further, that thus far he had worked his way through school, that he had seen many dark days, but that he was now one of the janitors of the Institute, and had hopes of finishing from the Normal Department the following June. He believed that there was a bright future for him, and felt that the best things of life were not too good for him. And I must digress right here for a moment to say that this young man has succeeded admirably. Everybody knows him, for he is one of the chief Negroes of the Nation. And though he does not remember my first night at Lincoln Institute, I do, and he is closely associated with it. My bed-fellow that night was none other than the Ex-President of Quindaro University and Ex-Registrar of the United States Treasury.

The next morning myself and companion rose early and went to the city to look for work. We tramped around for several hours, but without success. Either, "The boy we had last year will be back," or, "We will not need a boy for a month or two," was the reply that we received

at every door. I was not daunted by these replies, but my companion was, and decided to catch a train and return home at once. I resolved to put in the rest of the day in search of a place, for I liked the Institute and did not mind a few hardships, provided I could get an opportunity to attend it. That day closed, however, with "nothing doing" for me. I had brought no baggage along with me, so I decided to return home and get my trunk, pretend to my mother that I had a place to work, and get back to Jefferson City in time to start in on the first day of opening, which was September 6th.

CHAPTER IV.

At School.

I know I must have looked and acted rather "green" on my entering Lincoln Institute the following Monday morning, for the life was entirely new to me, and all the faces were strange; the buildings were large and commodious and unlike any that I had ever seen before; the grounds were unfamiliar; the sleeping quarters were undesirable, having just been opened up; and many of the boys appeared to be mean and uncompanionable.

For the first three or four days I was very lonely and dispirited indeed. And, too, the question, "How was I to stay there?" was ever in my mind, for as yet I had not secured a place to work, though I had tried very hard. My classmates, however, soon began to take interest in me, and I found out through some of them that there was no need of my worrying or becoming discouraged, for there were many students in my condition; that this was the case at the beginning of every school year, and that almost invariably

things worked out all right for those who had the grit and determination to stay. These assurances strengthened me much in my resolve, and the prospect grew more beautiful and bright for me. And at the end of two or three weeks I had secured work and was rapidly growing in favor with my teachers and in popularity with classmates and students.

Besides, I was charmed with the intellectual atmosphere of the place, the like of which I had never seen or felt before. This new life of books, music, oratory, debate, and general intelligence was the source of much inspiration to me. I also realized that my classmates and associates were the cream of the State, and that I had connected myself with a great family that was struggling to lift itself up on a higher and broader plane, which worthy ambition from childhood up had been my aim. I had long hoped for such opportunities and such associations, and now my hopes were realized. I was happy, contented, and proud, notwithstanding the fact that I had a long way yet to go, and how I was to go the distance was by no means settled.

It would be impossible for me, in this brief account of myself, to relate even half the important incidents of the eight years I spent in

"At the end of the first year I returned home."

Lincoln Institute as a student. Suffice it to say that I had my ups and downs, as all other earnest and determined students have.

At the end of the first year I returned home, and I was proud indeed to tell of my progress and of the great opportunities presented at Lincoln Institute.

I also had the pleasure of chatting with my white companion about the Negro boarding-school, while he told of the course that he was taking in a business college at Sedalia. And though he may have not, I distinctly remembered what he used to tell me when we were little playmates, "Colored people do not have colleges." And though I never mentioned these things to him, I was convinced that it was the prejudice that existed in his little heart, prejudice for which he was not responsible, that prompted him to say these heart-breaking things to me.

In a few months after this, when I had returned to school, I received the shocking intelligence that my little white companion was dead. This event grieved me very much indeed. It was many months before I could realize the truth of this sad intelligence. Our intimacy and friendship had finally come to an end, in a way we had not expected.

CHAPTER V.

The Evening Star Quartet.

I belonged to the Evening Star Quartet, which organization furnished entertainment on various occasions and in various places. We were known through the city, and were called on for concerts and serenades frequently, the contracting parties paying well for our services. Every Saturday night the guests of the Madison Hotel expected us, and we would always make special preparations for their entertainment. Our leader, besides being a triangle-player, recited stump speeches and comical selections; our tenor was a great whistler and played well on the mouth-organ; our basso was skillful with a mandolin; and your humble servant, who was the baritone singer in the quartet, played the guitar. Thus you see we had a rare aggregation of talent and were capable of being the best for this kind of work in the State. Our repertoire of songs was replete with solos, duets, medleys, quartets, and selections from operas, comic and

otherwise, and we boasted of our superiority over the Silver Tongue Quartet, who were our rivals and had their residence upon the Lincoln Institute grounds.

We were at our best while the World's Fair was going on at Chicago. We saw great possibilities over there for such a quartet as we had. We would meet and at our rehearsals discuss the advisability of quitting school early that year and singing our way to the great White City. We were not long in making up our minds that this was the thing to do. So we began to make preparations, and in the month of May, on one Sunday afternoon, after responding to an invitation to sing two seletcions at a sacred concert at the Baptist church, we started; and ere the sweet strains of "Nearer, My God, to Thee" and a chant of "The Lord's Prayer" had ceased to ring in the ears and hearts of this audience, we, having filed out before dismissal, were well on our way to what then looked like pleasure and prosperity.

The following morning found us in Fulton, Missouri. There were many people in town that day, on account of a big horse show that was being held there. Things "looked good" to us, so we opened up with some of our favorite selec-

tions, to the delight of the great crowd that was not long in gathering. We passed the hat after we had sung several selections, and the clinking of coins was indeed pleasant to our ears, while glorious visions of the great White City rose before our eyes. That night our efforts on the streets were no less successful, and the coins were almost as plentiful, and the next morning we left Fulton in a very cheerful mood.

At Mexico we did fairly well, and would have been all right had we not stayed a day too long. We liked the girls of that place and spent our money freely on them, thinking that we could make it up at Louisiana, which was to be our next stop. After paying our board-bill and procuring tickets for the next stop, we found that our treasury department was very low. We reached Louisiana about eight o'clock in the morning, ate lunch at a colored restaurant, and then went out to look for some friends we knew. We spent the day pleasantly, and at night went up on the main street to sing. We did not do as well as we expected, but we succeeded in making expenses, including our fare to Roodhouse, Illinois, which was to be our next stopping-place.

But before we could get away from Louisiana the next day, our tenor singer took a chill and

"I belonged to the Evening Star Quartet, which organization furnished entertsinment on various occasions and in various places."

was awfully sick. It was impossible for us to travel with him in this condition, so we put him to bed and waited for his recovery. We gave him quinine, and when the fever which follows a chill came up, he was delirious and grew dangerous. He would stare at us wildly and threaten to do us bodily injury if we did not leave him. It took all our united efforts to hold him in bed while he was in this condition. However, as the fever left him he grew better, and when evening approached he was able to take the train for Roodhouse, Illinois.

We reached Roodhouse about eight o'clock that night, procured lodging at a white boarding-house, as there were but two colored families in the town and they could not accommodate us, and went up town to look the situation over and see what were the prospects for success. I wanted to leave the tenor singer at the house, as I had had the chills and knew how weak and faint one felt after such an experience; but the other boys insisted that our means were exhausted and we must sing that night in order to meet expenses. Our tenor singer thought he could make it. So, realizing the force of their argument, I gave over to them. We thought we would step in the restaurant connected with the

depot and drink a cup of coffee before proceeding further. We all went in, but our tenor claimed that he did not want anything and went out on the platform. It was not long before someone came in and told us that we had better look after our friend. We went outside the station, and found our tenor lying on the platform in an unconscious condition. We became very much alarmed about him. After a short while, he was restored to consciousness and felt able to return to the boarding-house. Our singing for that night was broken up. The next morning our tenor was no better, and we began to think what was best to do. We all could not remain there until he recovered, for we had no money and our instruments would be good for but one or two days at best. And there was no telling how long our tenor might be ill.

We finally hit upon this scheme: as our bass singer had friends in St. Louis and could secure money as soon as he got there, and as our leader was a hustler and could get over the roads, these two should go on to St. Louis and leave me there to care for the tenor until they could send money with which to redeem the instruments and to pay our fare to St. Louis. There was only $1.50 in our treasury. The bass singer had to use this

to induce the conductor to allow him to ride the distance of between seventy-five and a hundred miles, while the other fellow was to hustle. I did not like this arrangement much, for I was afraid of the tenor, in the first place, and did not know how to care for sick people. So I suggested that the leader remain there with the sick tenor and I be allowed to run chances with the conductors to get to St. Louis. After some parleying and wrathful expressions, it was agreed that I should be the one to go along with the bass.

That night, in the midst of an awful downpour of rain, we hastened to the station to await the arrival of our train. We both boarded, the bass going in one coach and I another. I pretended to be asleep when the conductor came in the coach where I was. He looked down on me, passed on, and said nothing. As the morning dawned and the train drew nearer to St. Louis I began to feel much better. I must confess that I was uneasy the greater part of the ride. But I grew bolder as the train sped on and on toward St. Louis, and when we were within a few miles of the great city, I went into the toilet-room and performed my ablutions. On my return, in the vestibule, I met the conductor. He asked me

where I got on. I told him at Louisiana. He began to question me about certain people who lived there, and I answered him as best I could, turning the conversation as quickly as possible to the weather and crops. He soon left me, for we were now very near the bridge in East St. Louis. I went into the coach where my bass companion was, and he seemed very much surprised to see me; he had not seen me since the train left Roodhouse, and he was laboring under the impression that I was left.

We were now at the bridge, and as I did not have that portion of the ticket which carries one over the bridge and my companion had only succeeded in persuading the conductor to allow him to go as far as East St. Louis, we both got off. We fumbled around for some time in our pockets, and succeeded in digging up ten cents—enough to pay the toll across the bridge.

Our plans thus far had been carried out all right, and in a few days they were completed by the arrival of the two other members of the company, with the instruments and baggage.

I never could have any luck in St. Louis, and after remaining there for two weeks, I borrowed money from a friend and secured passage over to Chicago. I arrived there at eight o'clock in

the morning, and went to work as porter in a café at twelve. I remained there two weeks, after which I went out near the World's Fair grounds and helped furnish up one of the many hotels that were being built in close proximity to the fair grounds. This carrying furniture up five and six flights of stairs was the hardest work that I ever did in my life; but I stuck to it until it was done. When this was done, I found no difficulty in finding other work.

This was the most successful season that I spent during my school career. I had an opportunity to see much of the fair. I purchased a new trunk and filled it up with clothing, and the following year, when school was out, had some money left.

My companions in St. Louis finally made their way over and went to work. We would see each other often, and sometimes sing for our own amusement and pleasure, but we never thought of trying to earn a living by our musical talents in the great White City.

CHAPTER VI.

My Last Year in School.

In this way I continued to struggle on and on with my school work until seven years had slipped away and the time for my graduation was drawing nigh. I could now see the goal for which I had so long been striving. I had succeeded in some way, I knew not how. And although my last year promised many more trials and besetments, I had grown callous to hardships and did not mind those that were in store for me during my last year. And so, girding myself up for the final struggle, I finished with great pride and satisfaction to myself.

Besides completing the collegiate course as laid down in the school curriculum, I had formed many lasting friendships, made a favorable impression with my teachers, and shared the goodwill and best wishes of all classes alike.

I was indeed proud of my record as a student. I had been an active member of all the literary organizations connected with the school, was one

of the organizers of the first band and orchestra that the institution ever had (playing the cornet in the band and bass violin in the orchestra), was identified with choirs, quartets, and choral societies, and had done much in the interest of athletics for the school (playing short stop on the baseball team and having the name of being the best boxer in the school).

And now, when I had delivered my graduating oration on the 14th of June, 1897, in the Hall of the House of Representatives at the Capitol building, my school life as a student was over.

CHAPTER VII.

In Search of a School.

After graduating, I went home to spend a few weeks with my folks. I remained there till the latter part of August, when I began to grow restless and impatient. Time was passing away, and I was anxious to secure some kind of profitable employment for the winter. Everything that I had obtained thus far in life I had been obliged to get by hustling, and I was quite sure that the same would be true in this case. So, when an excursion from Kansas City to St. Louis came to our town, I boarded it and pulled out for the Smoky City. On my arrival in St. Louis, I was told by the people with whom I was stopping that there were several vacancies for teachers in St. Louis County. So, with very limited means, I started out to find some of these vacancies and, if possible, secure a situation.

The first place to which I came I was told that there was a vacancy in the colored school, and that if I could see the directors, I could in

all probability secure the situation. After much hard work, I succeeded in finding some of the directors, and they wanted to see my certificate. I had none, for I was a graduate from the Collegiate Department of Lincoln Institute, and the diploma which I received did not entitle me to teach in the State without further examination. So they said they could not talk business with me until I secured a certificate from their County Supervisor.

This meant that, with my limited means, I should go to Allenton, Missouri, where the County Supervisor lived; and, seeing that this was my only course if I wanted to teach in the county, I went to Allenton the next day. I found the Supervisor easily, and after paying him one dollar and fifty cents out of my limited means, this amount being the examination fee, he gave me paper and pencil and told me to begin writing. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when I began, and by four o'clock in the afternoon I had completed the list of questions. He hastily corrected my papers, and wrote out a certificate and handed it to me, that I might be able to catch the train which left for Chesterfield at five o'clock. I thanked him kindly for what he had

done, and hastened back to the district where the vacancy existed.

I did not see the directors that night, as it was late when the train reached the place. But the next morning the man with whom I was stopping hitched up his cart and carried me to a place where the directors were holding a meeting. Presently we came up to where four of them were assembled near a barn. We greeted them, and then the man who was with me began talking and made himself obnoxious by his domineering attitudes and ways, insinuating that the board had never given the colored school a square deal, and that this man here (meaning myself) was an intelligent man and deserved much more money than they were offering him. Before I could find time to speak, the members of the board were thoroughly wrought up and disgusted, and I saw my chances for work were spoiled by my association with this tactless fellow. They absolutely refused to talk business with me, so, with my limited means, I had to move on. The man who had the cart, with seeming regret, put me on the right road for the next district, and I was left to "foot it" alone through a strange country. I was not discouraged, however, and trudged along until I had reached the next place,

"I was left to foot it alone through a strange country."

There was now but one other place left. My intention was to reach this the next day. But the question as to how I was to get back to St. Louis was now confronting me. I was thirty miles away, and my limited means were exhausted. I had not even a penny with which to buy a stamp. But I was always resourceful, and, after studying the situation over for a while, concluded that the only way out of the predicament was to deliver a lecture at Centaur the following Friday night, and that by charging an admittance fee I might perhaps be able to secure the price of a ticket back to St. Louis. So, thus deciding, I secured three or four sheets of writing paper and wrote on them, advertising "A Great Lecture by Professor O. M. Shackelford, at the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Centaur, St. Louis County, Missouri, Friday night at 8 P. M. Admission, ten cents." I placed these notices in conspicuous places and told everyone I saw about the great lecture and invited them to be present.

The next morning, after having spent a lonely night with a family who lived in a hut surrounded by a very dense forest, I struck out for Centaur, and upon reaching that place, after having walked seven or eight miles, I immediately inquired as to the whereabouts of the directors of the colored

school. I was told, and went as directed, and found the one who lived nearest. I talked with him, and he liked me. He wrote a note to another member of the board, and requested me to take it over to him. I found the other member at home, gave him the note, and he, having read it, glanced me over and said that he was well pleased with my appearance, that there was only one other man to see, and that he would see this man himself and inform him of a meeting to be held at the school-house the following morning, at which time he thought they would elect me. He told me to be sure and be present at the meeting. I thanked him and turned away.

When I got back to Centaur, it was late in the evening, and the lady of the house was busy preparing supper. I heard her say something to her husband about a tramp, and I was sure she was talking about me. I knew, however, how to brace up and look genteel, and did so. I sat down to the table (I was very tired and hungry), and enjoyed a supper of fried chicken, hot biscuits, and coffee very much. I also slept well that night, for I was in need of rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Six-Months School Secured.

The next morning, after eating breakfast, I went to the place where the board was to meet. I found them there, talking over business pertaining to school matters. They greeted me cordially, and soon turned their attention to the selection of a teacher for the colored school. I showed them my certificate and recommendations, and they seemed unanimous in the belief that I was the right man, and proceeded without hesitation to elect me to teach their six-months school, at a salary of thirty dollars per month.

I was too tired to protest or to make a show of dissatisfaction. In truth, I had had enough of tramping through the hot sun, the dusty roads, and the dense thickets of St. Louis County. Besides, my shoes were worn out, and on this account I could go no further had I the strength or inclination to do so. I had covered nearly every foot of ground from Centaur to St. Louis, and I was only too glad to have my labors ended

in this way if they could possibly be. So I accepted the place and felt very much relieved.

Several persons came out to the lecture that night, but I postponed it till a later date. The truth is, I had no lecture to deliver; though, had it come to a "show-down," it was my intention to speak my graduating oration, which was still fresh in my mind, and thus try to satisfy those who would be kind enough to come out to hear me.

My stay in St. Louis County was both pleasant and profitable. For here, on the banks of the majestic Missouri and amid the vine-clad rocks and foot-hills, sisters to the mighty Ozarks, in a place where Nature and Nature's God hold full sway, I did my first real thinking. Here I realized for the first time the possibilities of a broader life, and saw the necessity of a firm foundation for future growth.

The birds, the brooks, and the river furnished music for this place of Nature, and this music in turn lent inspiration to me and impelled me to pen many of the essays and poems now contained within this book. Here I drilled myself in elocution, oratory, and song, and had beautiful flowers and trees, which bowed their graceful forms in appreciation and approval, for my

"The house in which I taught was made of logs and did service for both school and church."

audience. Birds and squirrels and other habitants of this haunt of Nature were my friends. Who with the narrowest kind of soul would not be happy in an Eden like this?

The house in which I taught was made of logs, and it did service both for school and church. Through its cracks and crevices snakes and frogs often peeped good-naturedly and were not infrequent guests, to the amusement and delight of my circle of little backwoodsmen.

This was my first school, and I enjoyed my work, laboring as hard and as incessantly with these fourteen children for thirty dollars per month as I have since for more than double that amount.

CHAPTER IX.

Entering the Literary Field.

I went to St. Louis when my work was ended in the county, carrying with me the essays and poems which I had written there; for I liked them, not so much for their merit (for I doubted them in this respect), or because they sounded well to me, but because they had been my companions and the source of much delight. They had assisted wonderfully in passing away the long winter days, that no doubt would have been dull indeed had they not claimed my attention.

I do not know why, but I carried them to the Sunday editor of the *Post-Dispatch*. He read some of them, and was interested. He interviewed me, and then had an artist sketch me. On the next Sunday the *Post-Ditpatch* contained my picture with the article which follows; and I found myself talked of throughout the State, just as I was in Jefferson City when my poem on the Lincoln Institute fire was published.

While I was not altogether pleased with the

"write-up" which the *Post-Dispatch* gave me (newspapers never tell things just as they are), I felt some degree of satisfaction at having my name heralded throughout the country in such a laudable cause. It was at least one step in the literary field.

The article as published by the *Post-Dispatch* follows:

A Missouri Negro Who Longs to Gain Fame as an Author of Verse.

Otis M. Shackleford, a Missouri Negro, is ambitious to win the applause of men by his poetry. He teaches school in Centaur, St. Louis County, but his home is in Tipton, a small town in Moniteau County.

Shackelford is as black as any child of Africa, and has all the physical characteristics of his race. He boasts that only pure Negro blood flows in his veins. He said:

"My ambition is to be a great poet. I wish to show the world what the full-blooded Negro can do when he applies himself and refuses to become discouraged by the many prejudices which the white race holds against him. I have encountered many obstacles in my efforts to achieve this end, but so far I have found ways in which to overcome them. My advantages have not been any better than those of many another Negro boy. I was born in 1872, and my struggle

with poverty and misfortune began at that time. My parents, though more intelligent and better educated than most Negroes, were very poor. My father was a Methodist preacher and a school-teacher. He instilled into my heart a desire to get a good education, and when I was old enough to go to public school, I studied very hard.

"When I completed the public school course, my plans seemed to be balked. I had no money and it was impossible to get an education without it. But I got a position as waiter in a St. Louis hotel and soon made enough money to pay my way for a year at Lincoln Institute in Jefferson City.

"Soon after I entered that school I began to read the poems of Byron and Scott; and their beautiful verses made so vivid an impresson on me that I soon found myself trying to write in rhyme about things. I showed my productions to my schoolmates and teachers, and was complimented very highly. I did not try to publish any of them, and none of my poems appeared in print until three years later. When Lincoln Institute was burned in 1894 I wrote a poem about the fire, and it was printed in the Jefferson City *Courier*. Since then several of my short poems have been printed in Missouri weekly papers.

"I hope some day to be able to write verses good enough to be accepted for publication by the great magazines.

"I am making a special study of literature, and I read all the good poetry I can get. I want

to make myself an honor to my race, and I study through all my idle hours. Byron is my favorite poet, and I read one of his poems every day. All the other poets I like, but none of them can ever take Byron's place in my heart. I read not only in the English language, but also in the German, Latin, and Greek, which I have studied for many years.

"The spirit of my poems shall always be the betterment of the condition of my people. I want to see the Negro elevated to a high intellectual plane, and it is my purpose to assist him in every possible way to find the light.

"During the last five years I have written a hundred poems, and I have preserved every one of them."

Shackelford says that the following poem on "Music" is one of his best:

"Music, sweet Music, the language of love;
The language of passions which came from above;

The language of hope, of grief and despair;
The soother of pains and all earthly care.
We love thee, O Music, because thou are pure;
As echoes from Heaven ye came, we are sure;
A song from the angelic choir divine,
O Music, sweet Music, an art so fine.
Thou speakest for all who are sad and distrest—
The happy, the rich, the poor, and the blest,
The feeble, the blind, the wretched, the old;
By thee their feelings have sweetly been told."

Shackelford has the imagination of a poet, as the following lines, entitled "Are They Dreams?" indicate:

"Sweet is the solitude of one who alone
Takes a peep backward o'er the path he has come;
Sweet are the visions beneath childhood's sun,
Sweet the remembrance of one's happy home.

"Tell me, oh tell me, do they differ from dreams,
These sweet recollections and childhood scenes;
These visionary paths of the forest green,
The musical flow of the woodland stream?

"Tell me, oh tell me, if here down below,
Where mosses and ferns and sweet flowers grow,
Where music and song, with strain soft and low,
Be a sweet dream of Heaven, or do you know?"

CHAPTER X.

A Trip to California.

It was in the month of December, 1899, that the Pullman Company was enlisting the services of men to look after their coaches which were used for conveying soldiers westward *en route* for the Philippine Islands, just after the Spanish-American War, when things were in such an unsettled condition in those new possessions.

I chanced to be in St. Louis at this time and thought to take advantage of this opportunity to see some of the western country and also to acquaint myself with the soldiers and the soldiers' way of living. Hence I betook myself to the office of the general superintendent for the company, and, in a line of others, found no difficulty in securing the employment which I sought.

I was assigned and given equipment for a coach, and told to be prepared to depart early the following morning. I listened to all instructions carefully, and though I had never done any railroading before, at the end of the lecture I

found myself very well informed and felt confident that I could do what was required of me. The regiment to be conveyed at this time was the Forty-ninth U. S. Infantry. A finer-looking set of men never donned the uniform of blue than the ones found in this regiment. I was charmed with their appearance, and anticipated a glorious trip with them to California.

The next morning early, on schedule time, we pulled out from St. Louis, full of life and buoyant of spirit, bound for the rocky shores of the Pacific. San Francisco was the destination so far as myself and the rest of the Pullman employees were concerned. There were more than a hundred of us in all, but the trains were divided into three or four sections, so but few of us were together or saw each other after leaving St. Louis. Among the number of men on my section there happened to be one fellow that I knew in school, and naturally we became companions on the trip.

We traveled over the Union Pacific, and the first part of our journey was dull and monotonous, to say the least; but as we proceeded farther westward interest grew. The long ride through the broad prairies of western Kansas was prosaic indeed, there being nothing so favorable of

comment as the high cold winds, which blew almost constantly. We had little to do but to observe and study the make-up and characteristics of the soldiers who occupied seats in our respective coaches.

They were a jolly set, these; singing, dancing, swearing, and gambling constantly. Night did not put an end to their noisy frolics. They seemed to have no respect whatever for law and order. Some of them were ill-mannered, uncouth, and wholly degenerate. Those of the gentler sex could not approach the train without insult. Old men were made the butt of practical jokes, and boys were swindled out of their lunches which they had purchased with their own means. And these men were only controlled by rough, unkind officers, who ruled with an iron hand and who emphasized each command with a fearful oath. Such, as we observed it, was the *personnel* of the Forty-ninth, and with such on our five-days journey were we to be cooped up.

We were now among the mountains of Colorado, and, this being my first visit to such a region, I was naturally carried away. Pike's Peak, the Devil's Slide, the Forty-Mile Tunnel, the snow-capped mountains above, and the green valley below, filled my thoroughly aroused soul

with awe and amazement. A detailed description here is impossible. We sped on and on through Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, and as we did so the scenes, already so awe-inspiring, increased in grandeur and beauty, until at last we reached the Eden of the world—California, the land of surpassing beauty and splendor; a land that pen cannot describe and brush cannot portray. Here, where December has the attributes of May, birds were singing, flowers were blooming, fruits were ripening, bees were humming, brooks were babbling, and all nature was happy and gay.

Soon we were in the grand and magnificent city of San Francisco, and our soldiers were making preparations to quit the train on which they had been confined for five long and tedious days. We were all glad to quit our close and cramped-up quarters, and to once more plant our sleepy feet upon the glad green earth. In spite of the ill impression that the conduct of these boys had created within me, my heart swelled with pride when I beheld them in a magnificent line ready to respond to the commands of the officers. It was then that I realized that a soldier in camp, or one cramped up in the narrow confines of a railway coach, was far differ-

ent from one on dress parade or in line of duty. And I sympathized with them, and forgot what seemed to be their many ills and shortcomings.

Myself and companion remained with our coaches and were taken back to Oakland, where we were side-tracked. After checking up our linen and supplies and performing other duties which were required of us, we went up town to refresh ourselves with food in a fashionable restaurant. Having subsisted the past five days wholly on hard tack, coffee, and dried beef, we felt greatly the need of a change of diet. We ate our supper, which consisted of sirloin steak with mushrooms, French fried potatoes, hot biscuits, butter, and coffee. It is needless to say that we enjoyed it. We returned to our coaches, wrote a few letters to home and friends, and then, two thousand miles away in a strange land, tired and worn, we lay down for a deep sleep and sweet rest.

The next morning myself and companion, having slept much later than we expected, rose, ate breakfast, and planned a day for sight-seeing.

From childhood up I had had a great desire to see the Pacific, and now, with my dream so close to realization, I grew impatient with my

slow companion and proceeded on my journey without him.

I made my way to the pier, boarded one of the steamers, famous for its beauty and splendor in construction, and was soon ploughing my way across the bay to the Golden City. It was a beautiful morning in December. The air was fresh and the sky cloudless. Birds were singing, flowers were blooming, and the atmosphere was fragrant with the orange, the banana, the pineapple, and the rose. The women dressed in various costumes of light fabric, many of them wearing sailor hats, and looked much like the pictures of coast life that inlanders so often see. It was a glorious sight indeed.

Forty minutes were consumed in taking this delightful ride, at the end of which time I found myself upon a street-car, bounding oceanward, to the realization of my childhood dream. In the distance I could hear a mighty roar, which told me that we were nearing the ancient rock-bound shore. Imagine my feelings when in the next few moments I stood rapt in wonder and amazement at the awe-inspiring scene before me.

The billows with their white caps rolled high, and the foaming waters furiously lashed the shore. I stood there for some time, silent, dumb-

"I stood rapt in wonder and amazement at the awe inspiring scene before me."

founded, and amazed. And when at last my mind grew active, a thousand thoughts came teeming in and I was fearful that my soul, filled with so much ecstasy, might burst. I thought of the great Balboa, the first white man who ever gazed upon that vast expanse. I thought of the many thousands, lured on to these rugged shores by a lust for gold, whose bones were now bleaching in the dust. I thought of the sublime heights to which Byron soared when he wrote his "Apostrophe to the Ocean," and I could not refrain from shouting aloud these famous lines:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore."

And as I continued to gaze upon that rough, rugged, awful expanse a thousand other sublimer thoughts crowded my bewildered brain, which caused my delighted soul to cry out, "Glory! glory!" After some time, when my spirits had grown calmer, I remembered my intention to dip my hands and bathe my face in the mighty waters. This I did, and departed for other points along the shore.

I soon found myself on the veranda of the

famous Cliff House, gazing upon the rugged rocks and reefs some distance from the shore. And when I saw the seals rolling and tossing pitifully about on these rocks, and heard their sad and lonesome cry, which was a mixture of bark and wail, there was something so weird, something so human-like about them that I thought perhaps these were lost souls re-embodied thus and sent back to earth for punishment. And I gazed and gazed and thought and thought how wonderful are the works of God's creation! And thus I stood for a long time, rapt as one in a trance.

My greatest desire and purpose was now accomplished, and though I visited Golden Gate Park, the Sutro Bath Works, and many other places of interest, they were only ordinary in comparison with this great ocean view, and the like of which might be seen in any well-kept city of America.

I now betook myself back to the business section of the city; there I met my companion, and we joined in an expedition through Chinatown. We saw many interesting sights, observed many customs of Chinese life, and handled many things created by Chinese hand and brain. We did not tarry long, however, in this Oriental atmosphere,

for the tenants of the district looked and acted too sullen. We did not think they were pleased with out visit, and we were not quite sure that they did not mean to do us bodily harm; so, when a guide insisted that we go farther and see more, we thanked him and made our way to other points of interest in the great western city.

The next day we learned that the Tennessee soldiers had just arrived from Manila, that they were disembarking, and that it would be our duty to handle to Nashville the trains upon which they were to return. It was rumored that the Tennessee soldiers were a bad lot, that they had killed several Pullman employees, and that there was much trouble in store for those of us who were called upon to care for the cars which were to carry them back. I had no fears, however, and went to the office of the general superintendent; I was assigned to the car "Cleora," and was told to be ready to start the next day at two o'clock.

The next day at two o'clock I was at my post of duty. Every one was busy making preparations for the trip. Tramps and hoboes were much in evidence, and were planning to make their way home or to points farther east. A colored boy came up to me and said that he was

a member of the Pickaninny Band of Kansas City; that they had been making a tour around the world, but at Honolulu they got stranded and were compelled to disband; that he had worked his way on a steamer from Honolulu to San Francisco; that he had been there about a week, but was unable to find employment, and now he was anxious to get back to his home in Kansas City; that this was the only chance he had, and he asked if I could not take him. I believed him and was sorry for him; so I spoke to my conductor in his behalf. The conductor said that he would not be responsible for him; that I could take him if I desired, but that he was not supposed to know anything about it. I thought the matter over, and decided that I should pass that way but once, and if there was any good that I could do, I would do it then; so I took the boy on board, secluded him in one of the wash-rooms of the car and locked the door.

It was not long before our train pulled out on the Southern Pacific for Los Angeles and other points in southern California. On and on we sped through this fairy land of fruits and flowers and perpetual spring.

The ride homeward promised to be more pleasureable and fuller of comfort than the one

westward. The soldiers were a lot of good-natured boys, some of them from refined families, and ranged from the ages of eighteen to twenty-five. They were kind to me, and got into my confidence at once, trusting large sums of money, jewelry, souvenirs, and keepsakes of all kinds to my care. Many of them were "mothers' boys" and were so glad they were going home. It was evident that they had been misrepresented by malicious tongues. There was a striking contrast between their behavior and that of the colored troops which had been conveyed thence a few days before.

Then, too, a delegation of Tennessee ladies had come all the way from Nashville to meet the sons of their State who had recently been mustered out from service in the Spanish-American War. These added dignity and called for respect from soldiers who might have reckless or vicious inclinations.

The commissary department, too, was conducted on a different plan. The tables were literally covered with every variety of food in the market, and the boys ate from plates with silver knives and forks, instead of from mess-pans made of tin with knives and forks of iron. They were given three meals a day, and they slept in

berths as other tourists did. So there was no reason why every one should not be happy and comfortable on this journey through the South.

Thus equipped, we continued through southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee to Nashville, stopping at the most important cities and towns along the route. Among these the most important were Phoenix, Arizona, Deming, New Mexico, San Antonio, Texas, New Orleans, Louisiana, Mobile and Montgomery, Alabama, and Nashville, Tennessee, which was now our destination.

We were now at the end of our journey, and no unpleasant incidents had happened to mar our homeward trip. The boy that I brought from California got awfully tired in his close quarters, and one night, while everyone slept as he thought, came out and was acting porter when someone spied him. He was mistaken for a robber or an intruder, and was roughly handled and put off the train, in Texas. He managed, however, to get back on, and found his way to his hiding place, and he was glad to remain in there until the train reached the end of its journey. He thanked me kindly for what I had done for him, and assured me that he would have no

difficulty now in getting back to Kansas City, and that he would remember me to the longest day he lived. The soldiers, bidding me good-bye, left the train to go to their friends and respective homes. There was a great holiday in Nashville that day; drums were beating, flags were flying, cannon were bursting, and men, women, and children were shouting for joy at the return of the troops. Enthusiasm was high indeed in Nashville that day.

The next day, after visiting the schools and some friends, I was given transportation to St. Louis. I arrived in St. Louis the next morning, a wiser and much stronger man than I was when I departed a fortnight before.

This event of my life happened nearly ten years ago; but I remember the incidents almost as clearly and as distinctly now as I did the week after they happened.

CHAPTER XI.

Teaching in My Alma Mater.

Since I left St. Louis County, where I taught my first school, many important things have happened in my life; but I shall not attempt to note them here. I have enjoyed the school work in which I have engaged since then. The uplift of my people has always been the highest aim in my mind, and I have conscientiously striven to that end. 'Tis true I have made mistakes; but this only proves me mortal. If we did not make mistakes, we would be perfect; then we could not dwell here. We are put here to develop and grow into perfection, and when we become completely so, God has use for us in other spheres.

My work at Versailles for one year, and at Warrensburg for three, was entirely satisfactory to me. I am sure that I did good work in these places, and that the inspiration lent the boys and girls is lasting.

I know of no event in my life, however, so

important as the call from the principalship of the Howard School at Warrensburg to teach in the English and mathematical departments at Lincoln Institute, my Alma Mater, where I had spent eight of the happiest years of my existence as a student, notwithstanding the hardships that I had to undergo. This call alone I deem an honor worthy of note, and feel proud to say that the four years spent there as a teacher were in the interest of the good name of the school and in the interest of the Negro youth of the State.

I loved my Alma Mater, and was loyal to her. I felt the great responsibility which rested upon me and upon those in whose charge she was placed. I was jealous of her good name, and did everything in my power to sustain it. I believed that when a student or teacher was caught in wrong-doing within her sacred walls or upon her sacred premises, he should suffer the severest consequences. I realized that the school should not be entrusted to careless hands, and I took a stand for strict discipline and high morals. And because I was earnest in my belief and backed it up with forcible words on all occasions, I grew in the disfavor of the President, who finally recommended my dismissal from the institution, on the ground that I was nervous and highly ex-

citable (which meant that I was too conscientious); and did not fit well in the work.

My four-year stay at Lincoln Institute was time by no means wasted. I improved myself in many ways. I was always busy at something. Besides my regular school work, I took great interest in the band and orchestra, sustaining these valuable acquisitions to the school with means from my own pocket; and I was glad to make the sacrifice in the interest of the school. I continued to write essays and poems, and at night in my room found much pleasure in this tedious work. On one occasion I gave a poetic recital to the Buskin Society, which was one of the literary organizations of the Institute. This recital was the source of much delight to all present, and was for a long time after the comment of the whole school.

I was willing at all times to aid in the order and discipline of the place, accompanying the girls to the city, to church, or to the country for a walk; and often at midnight or in early morning I have been aroused from my peaceful slumbers to see some boy or afflicted girl off on the train. On one occasion a boy died in the dormitory, and it became my duty to take charge of the body and accompany his father home. It

was one of the coldest nights in winter, and we had to go eighteen miles overland that night before we could reach the home of the dead boy and come into the presence of a grief-stricken mother.

I also enjoyed my work in the school-room and studied for the entertainment of my classes, and sought the best methods for presenting subjects to them. If interest lagged, I always hit upon some scheme to stimulate it. One of my methods, entitled "Football in the Reading Class," was sent to the *Intelligence,* a school journal published at that time in Oak Park, Illinois. It was accepted and caused much favorable comment when it was published. The article as it appeared in the *Intelligence* follows:

Football in the Reading Class.

Do you find the pupils of your fourth and fifth grade reading classes dull and inattentive? Do you find it impossible to awaken them in any way? Have all methods failed? If they have, as a last resort, try this one: Make the reading lesson a game or contest between the boys and girls. Children are naturally fond of games, and if all their recitations could be conducted on the plan of some game, better work would be done by the so-called dull and disinterested ones.

I find it an admirable plan to conduct my reading classes on the order of a football game. Good results have come from it, and I think my co-workers will agree with me when they have tried it once.

Assign a lesson of two or three pages, according to the general ability of the class, and divide the recitation period into "halves." Call them the "first half" and the "second half." Let the ends of the paragraphs, if they are very long, represent "goals." If they are very short, it will take two or three of them to represent a "goal."

The teacher, as referee, shall call the game. Let a girl, for instance, get up and read. The boys are to watch closely and criticise, and immediately call the attention of the teacher to any mistake that the girl makes.

One, two, or three mistakes may be considered a "down," according to the rule adopted by the teacher and class beforehand. If a girl makes three mistakes, the third mistake may be called the "third down," and a boy takes up the reading where she left off.

The girls are now on the alert for mistakes; and when a boy has made three mistakes, or "downs," as we call them, another girl takes up the reading, and if she goes to the end of the paragraph or "goal" without making a mistake, she has made a "touchdown." A "touchdown" means five points in favor of the girls.

Then if the girl, or any one on her side, can

relate smoothly the paragraph or portion of the story read, they have "kicked goal," which counts as another point, making the score 6 to 0 in favor of the girls. The game can thus continue until the time for the recitation is up, and the party making the greatest number of points within the limit of the recitation period wins the game.

This reading contest may be had not too frequently, but as often as the teacher deems it wise. It will not be void of results. Try it, and its advantages can readily be appreciated.

Many other methods equally productive of results have I resorted to in my class work; but, since this is not a treatise on pedagogy, I shall not present them here. I only mention this one instance to show my interest, my activity, and my resourcefulness in stimulating dull or disinterested minds and instilling within them a desire to excel.

To improve myself along the lines that I was teaching, I spent three successive summers in Chautauqua, New York. I felt that the State Normal for Negroes in Missouri ought to have the best talent that could be found, and I set out to try to prepare myself to satisfy the demand, so far as I was concerned. For this purpose I found that there was no better place than Chautauqua, New York.

Chautauqua, a charming little town situated in western New York, on the banks of a beautiful lake which bears the same name, has a unique history. It was founded by Henry Miller and Bishop Vincent, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, back in the early seventies. It at first was used as a camp-meeting ground, but has since, by constant growth along religious and intellectual lines and by its ever-increasing and extensive lecture course, become one of the greatest educational centers of the world. It is no place for idlers; still, one can sit with folded hands and breathe the intellectual air, and thereby become inspired to do great things. Activity seems to be the watchword. And every hour of the day, from seven in the morning till ten at night, something interesting, something beneficial is going on. The best lecturers, the best writers, the best musicians, the best scholars, the greatest of earth along all lines of work or professions, are seen and heard here.

It was here, under some of the best specialists in our American colleges, that I did my summer work. Latin, German, French, higher English, Arithmetic, Algebra, and Geometry being the subjects which I took. I also did work in the School of Expression, and took advantage of the

discussions on pedagogy and school management in the Teachers' Institute of New York State, held on the grounds. I was strengthened intellectually, morally, and spiritually, and on my return to Lincoln Institute endeavored to disseminate whatever of good I had learned, and thereby benefit the youths that chanced to fall under my guardianship.

While at Chautauqua, I took advantage of the excursions and low rates to visit some of the larger cities of the East; Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Asbury Park, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls being included in my itinerary. These I should be pleased to discuss in detail, for my visits to them and the sights that I saw while at them aided me much in some of the subjects that I was called upon to teach.

Boston is perhaps the greatest city in America in which to study the early history of this country. While there, I visited Harvard University; the Boston Public Library, said to be the finest in the country; the State House, the walls of which are decorated with historical designs and inscriptions; the statue of Abraham Lincoln breaking the shackles from the Negro slaves; the Old South Church; Faneuil Hall; the spot where Crispus Attucks, the Negro hero, fell;

and a hundred other places of historical interest and renown. I also visited Charlestown, and sat for several hours at the foot of Bunker Hill Monument. While there I thought of the battle fought June 17, 1775, and the many Revolutionary heroes who fell. I thought of Daniel Webster, who fifty years later delivered his famous oration, in which he said: "Venerable men, you have come down to us from a former generation. God has bounteously lengthened out your lives that you might behold this glorious day." These and other thoughts of Colonial days held my attention for hours.

But the National G. A. R.s, who were meeting in Boston at that time, claimed most of my attention. They had their usual street parade, and about 25,000 old veterans were in line. Their feeble steps, gray hairs, and bent forms, but cheerful countenances, furnished material and inspiration for the poem entitled "The Old Soldiers—Let Them Talk," found in another portion of this book. It was a magnificent sight and, vision-like, it has returned to me many times since.

Bits of History in Verse;

OR

A Dream of Freedom Realized

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Prologue.—The Negro.—Secret Hopes of Freedom.—Secret Meetings.—The Underground Railroad.—Growing Wise.—A Bone of Contention.—Preparing for a Frolic.—On the Way.—The Fun Begins.—Something Sad About It.—Indignation and Secession of the South.—The Struggle Between the North and the South.—The Negro Called to Arms.—Fighting for Freedom.—The Triumph.—Abraham Lincoln.

PROLOGUE.

Sing to me, O Muses of Heaven,
Of a race that has had its sorrows,
Had its griefs and its woes and its sufferings;
Of a race forlorn and forsaken,
Of a race despised and downtrodden;
Of a race from shores that were foreign,
Was ensnared and seized and bounden,
And brought to a country so barren,
A country so wild and unsettled,
And sold as slaves to a master,
To toil and be driven as cattle,
To work in the fields and the forest,
And build up a new land and country.

Sing to me, O Muses of Heaven,
Of this race that has had its sorrows,
Its griefs and its woes and its sufferings;
Condemned and scorned and called worthless,
Because of its lowly condition;
For which 'tis not called on to answer,
For which other races must answer,
Since others have caused it to be so.

Condemned and scorned and called worthless,
Because of its swarthy complexion;
A birthmark of honor—God-given,
Which no man should 'tempt to be rid of;
A mark that we all should be proud of,
Because it is true and God-given.

Sing to me, O Muses of Heaven,
Of this race, forlorn and forsaken,
Of this race, despised and downtrodden;
That was seized from shores that were foreign
And brought to the farms and plantations,
In America's land of the sunshine,
To the land of the palm and palmetto,
To dwell and be simple and thankful,
In the huts and the rude little cabins.
Built by the hands of a master,
To protect from the winds and the weather.

Sing to me, O Muses of Heaven,
Of this race that was sold to a master,
To toil and be driven as cattle;
To work in the fields and the forest,
And build up a new land and country,
A country that now is the foremost,
That stands at the head of all others,
In science, art and achievements,

And things which persuade us to wonder.
So great that all nations respect her,
And call her to settle their quarrels;
A country owing much of its greatness,
In wealth and other achievements,
To the faithful toil of the black man,

Condemned and scorned and called worthless,
Because of his lowly condition,
For which he's not called on to answer,
For which other races must answer,
Since they have caused him to be so.
A country, with its lakes and its rivers,
Its forests, its fields, and its landscapes,
Its mountains, its hills, and its valleys;
A country with beauty surpassing.
And the Negro, who toiled to help make it,
Deserves a big share in its profit.

A race condemned and called worthless,
Because of its swarthy complexion;
A birthmark of honor—God-given,
Which no man should 'tempt to be rid of;
A mark that we should all be proud of,
Because 'tis true and God-given,
Vast fields of rice and tobacco,
And things that are wealth-producing,

Were made by the hands of the Negro;
A race forlorn and forsaken,
A race despised and downtrodden,
That from the shores that were foreign
Was ensnared and seized and bounden;
And brought to a country so barren;
A country so wild and unsettled.

Sing to me, O Muses of Heaven,
Of this race that was sold to a master,
To toil and be driven as cattle,
To work in the fields and the forests
And build up a new land and country;
The brightest and best among nations;
The land of the pine and the fig-tree,
The land of the flowers and sunshine;
America's beautiful Southland.
Sing to me, O Muses of Heaven,
Of the race that is called the Negro.

THE NEGRO.

See him on the old plantation,
As he toils and labors daily;
Labors long, from morn till evening,
In the fields of cane and cotton;
Silver cotton, "king of market,"
In America's great Southland;
In the land of flowers and sunshine.
Always faithful, ever hopeful
For a day of sweet deliverance
From the hands of some cruel master,
Growing rich and growing prosperous
By the toil of faithful servants.
Growing rich and prosperous daily
By the hands of those he hated,
By the hands of those he punished.
Thus the Negro labored onward,
Watched and dogged by overseer,
Fed on food so coarse and scanty,
Scarcely 'nough to keep him going.
Scarcely 'nough to keep him living;
Just enough to keep him working
Was the food on which they fed him.

Clad in clothes that weren't sufficient
To protect him from the weather,
From the cruel blasts of winter
That extend into the Southland,
In the land of the palmetto,
In the land of flowers and sunshine;
Just enough to hide his person
Were the clothes in which they clad him.
Thus he traveled meekly onward,
Going to the tasks they gave him
With a sort of resignation,
Not unlike a beast of burden;
Like unto a faithful Christian,
Doomed to die from pain and torture,
On account of some great principle;
So the Negro traveled onward,
Quite despondent, heavy-hearted,
Always faithful, not unhopeful,
Of a day of sweet deliverance.

"See him on the old plantation as he toils and labors daily."

SECRET HOPES OF FREEDOM

In the fields he was always singing,
Pouring forth the grief within him
In the strains of sweetest music,
Giving vent to thoughts and feelings
In the tones of minor music;
Tones that set us longing, yearning,
For a home that 's far off yonder,
For a land that 's bright with sunshine,
For a place that knows no bondage,
Knows no master, knows no sorrow.
In a land that 's 'way off somewhere,
In a place we know not of,
In the mind are only glimpses.
And they spent the days in singing,
Working in the fields of cotton,
Mother thinking of her children,
Father mindful of his family.
Thus the Negro labored onward,
Singing in his woe and misery,
Hoping for the days of freedom,
Dreaming dreams of happy freedom,
For the freedom of his family.
And he often sat and brooded,

In the hours of darkest midnight,
In the days before the war-time,
In the gloom of cruel slavery,
With no gleam of light as freedom,
But with hope within his bosom;
With a hope he dared not speak of,
Or to think of very often,
Lest someone might hear him thinking,
Tell the driver, cruel master,
Who was willing, always ready,
When the least excuse was given,
To inflict a hundred lashes
On the backs of humble servants,
Toiling for their master's welfare.
But his secrets burned within him,
Burned so bright and were so cheerful
That he could not keep them longer,
Had to share them with his brother;
For his brother toiled beside him,
Shared his griefs and shared his burdens,
Suffered pain and suffered hunger,
Just the same as he had suffered.
Then, if there was any joy
In that dream of coming freedom,
Why not, why not tell his brother,
Let him have that selfsame feeling,
Which doth buoy us up and onward

In our trials and tribulations,
Makes us bright and gay and happy
'Cause of something better for us?
So he told his trusted brother;
They began their secret meetings,
Whispering softly to each other
Some of the secrets of their masters,
As they accident'ly heard them
Talking of their lands and Negroes,
What might happen in the future
If the Northern people triumphed
In th' election coming onward;
What might happen to the Negroes,
What might happen to the Southland,
What might happen to the household,
If the Northern people triumphed
In th' election coming onward.

SECRET MEETINGS,

And they held their secret meetings,
Learned a great deal from each other
That they theretofore knew not of;
For they had no way of knowing,
Could not read the weekly journals,
For their masters had prevented
Them from study and from learning,
So that they were dull and ignorant—
Dull and ignorant, void of learning.
Thus their masters strove to keep them;
But they held their secret meetings,
Learned a great deal from each other,
Learned that other Negroes cherished
In their hearts and in their bosoms
Love of freedom, love of manhood;
That the hope was universal,
In the breast of every Negro,
That at some time in the future,
Negroes all should have their freedom.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.

Learned about a few uprisings
By the Negroes of the Southland;
How they flew to arms of sudden,
Killed their masters and their families,
Made a dash for freedom northward,
But were caught and killed while fleeing
Toward the land of freedom northward.
Learned about a secret railway,
All about the stations near it;
How the slaves had traveled on it,
How they hid themselves in day-time,
How they traveled in the night-time;
All about the ones who ran it,
All about their secret kindness:
How they 'd help the Negro onward,
Onward through the secret passage,
Till he reached the land of freedom,
Land of freedom to the northward.

GROWING WISE.

Still they held their secret meetings,
And their minds grew sharp and subtle,
And they learned to trust each other;
Never hinting, never breathing,
What was said in secret meetings.
And their masters did not know that
They had gotten so much knowledge,
So much craft and so much cunning,
In those quiet secret meetings,
Else they would have quickly stopped them,
Whipped them with a wicked cowhide,
Probably sold them further southward,
To a mean and cruel master,
Just because they had such wisdom,
Which they might impart to others,
Make them wise and make them crafty,
Make them mean and hard to handle.

"And they held their secret meetings, learned a great deal from each other."

A BONE OF CONTENTION.

Still they held their secret meetings,
Learned some of the burning questions,
That were talked of in the Southland;
Learned that there was quite a struggle
'Tween the North and sunny Southland,
O'er the bondage of the Negro,
O'er the question of his freedom,
And the anger of the southman,
And the firmness of the northman,
In the election coming onward.
What would happen to the Negro,
What would happen to the Southland,
If the Northern people triumphed
In th' election coming onward.
But they never breathed or hinted
What they learned in secret meeting
Tc their young and simple brothers;
For they feared they might not keep it.
They were young and they were thoughtless,
Full of fun and prone to frolic,
Which they practiced in the night-time,
When their masters were asleeping,
When their masters could not see them.

PREPARING FOR A FROLIC.

See them when their work is over,
Fixing for a dance or frolic
In a vacant Negro shanty
In a valley far off yonder,
In a valley ten miles distant.
How are they to go the journey?
Tired from working with the cotton,
Tired from working in the corn-field,
Tired from struggle with the oxen,
Tired of laboring all the day long.
Harder problems have they solved,
Harder questions have they answered;
Closer places have they been in
Than the question of this distance,
Of this distance to the valley.
How to get a Christmas dinner,
How to dress up for a party,
How to satisfy their hunger
When their masters failed to feed them,
How to get a Sunday garment
When their masters failed to clothe them,
These and other harder problems
Had they solved with ease so often

That to them was second nature.
Every evil has its remedy,
Every problem its solution,
And this little ten-mile distance
Was no barrier to their pleasure.

ON THE ROAD.

They would steal old master's horses,
Fat and sleek and full of spirit;
Steal them while that he was sleeping,
Soundly sleeping in his mansion;
From the stable would they steal them,
Ride them upward through the valley
To the place of fun and frolic,
Till they reached the very doorway
Of the place of fun and frolic.
There a score or more of Negroes
Would assemble in the night-time,
Would assemble for their pleasure,
After toiling hard the day long,
After toiling hard the week long.
Thus they whiled away their sorrow,
Thus they made their burdens lighter,
Thus they had their recreation,
Through a life that was a struggle.

THE FUN BEGINS.

There they'd meet and greet each other,
Some in mistress' evening dresses,
Some in master's Sunday garments,
Some in clothes that did not fit them,
Some in waistcoats old and rusty,
Some in things that were respectful,
Suited for this glad occasion.
And they'd stay till day was breaking,
Keeping time to bow and fiddle;
Bowing, scraping, cutting capers,
Treading softly, stamping loudly,
Stamping loudly to the music.
Fun it was to see them dancing,
Keeping time to bow and fiddle.
But the joyous dance was ended
With the dawn of early morning.
And the Negroes scampered homeward
From the place of fun and frolic
To the place of toil and labor,
Lighter hearted, better spirited,
By the contact with the neighbors
From the other big plantations.

SOMETHING SAD ABOUT IT.

Thus the Negroes stole their pleasures,
In the darkness of the midnight,
Midst the gloom of cruel slavery,
In the days before the war-time.
Though we smile, for 'tis amusing,
There is something sad about it;
Something sad about their doings,
Something sad about their pleasures.
In their singing there was sadness,
In their dancing there was pathos,
In their nonsense there was pity.
And our eyes begin to moisten,
Down our cheeks the tears to trickle,
When we come to think about it:
How these Negroes, worn and weary,
Nothing in the world to hope for,
Nothing in their lives to live for,
'Tween the hours of night and morning,
Had to steal a little pleasure,
Had to steal a little pastime.

"And they'd stay 'till day was breaking, keeping time with bow and fiddle."

INDIGNATION AND SECESSION OF THE SOUTH.

While the Negroes thus were sorrowing,
And were stealing out at midnight,
And were holding secret meetings,
And were having secret pleasures,
In the breasts of Southern white men
Burned the flames of indignation,
Burned the fire of bitter hatred
For a class of Northern people,
'Cause they interfered with slavery,
Would not have it in the Northland,
Tried to stop it in the Southland,
Put a limitation on it.
And disputes grew very heated,
In the Congress of the country,
O'er the awful slavery question,
O'er tne Negro and his freedom,
O'er the Negro and the Union.
And th' election coming onward
Set the Southern people thinking,
Planning what to do if beaten,
If defeated in th' election.

In the course of many events,
Far too many to relate here,
Things had taken on an aspect
That was threat'ning immense danger
To the Union and the country
Of the States in North America;
For the North had been victorious,
And the South had been defeated,
In th' election in the fall-time.
Abraham Lincoln was elected
As the chief of this great Nation.
Then the Southern States seceded;
Said, "Too much, we cannot bear it."
And they cut the ties that bound them
To the Union and the statehood,
And established in their own land,
In the land of cane and cotton,
In the land of flowers and sunshine,
In the land of slave and master,
Government suited for their people.
Thus the Union went to pieces,
Thus the government of our fathers,
Who had fought the Revolution,
Who had builded up a nation,
Went to pieces in a twinkling.
When affairs had reached this crisis,
And the South seemed so determined

In their efforts to establish
As an independent nation,
Free to exercise her State right,
Free to buy and sell her Negroes.
Then the North went into counsel,
And discussed the situation;
And came out with this decision:
That they 'd go into the Southland,
Whip this bold, rebellious people;
Force them back into the Union,
Make them do what they were bidden.
And they went into the Southland
With a great determination
Just to do what they decided.

A STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH.

Thus began a fearful struggle
'Tween the North and sunny Southland.
But the North had underrated
Those with whom they were to combat;
Did not know their strength in battle,
Did not know of their equipments,
Did not know of their resources,
Did not know of their surroundings,
Did not know the intense feeling
Burning in the Southern bosom.
They forgot that they were brothers,
Brothers in the Revolution,
Brothers in the strife for freedom
From the tyranny of England,
And there was that fire and valor
In the hearts of Southern warriors,
Just the same as Northern foeman.
So they fought a bloody struggle
With the brave and fearless Southman.

But they found they could not conquer
In the time which they expected.
So they had to call the Negro,
Call the Negro to assist them.
"Come and help us, colored brother,
Come and help us fight these rebels,
Help us whip these Southern people,
And we 'll give to you your freedom."
Thus they spake unto the Negro;
And the Negro quickly answered
To this cry for their assistance.
And they went with pride and pleasure
To the struggling Northern army,
And they fought like fire and fury
'Gainst their brave old Southern masters,
'Gainst the ones who once had owned them,
'Gainst the ones who oft had flogged them.
With a will and with a vengeance,
Wild with rage they 'd charge an army,
Sweeping everything before them.
And the stories that were spreading,
That the Negroes all were cowards,

Would not stand their ground when fired at,
Proved to be a groundless theory;
That the Negro was a warrior,
Was a brave and fearless foeman,
Worthy of the place they gave him,
In the ranks of loyal subjects.
Thus we find him fighting bravely
In the line of dreadful battle,
Striking blows to gain his freedom,
Striking blows to save the Union.

THE TRIUMPH

Then at last the struggle ended,
And the North came out victorious,
And the South came up defeated,
Had to come back to the Union,
Had to give up all their Negroes,
Had to do as they were bidden.
There was sorrow in the Southland,
There was gloom instead of sunshine,
There were tears instead of joy,
There were prayers instead of curses,
There was quiet 'stead of boasting,
There was freedom 'stead of slavery,
There was union 'stead of discord,
When the civil strife was over.
There was joy in the Northland,
There were shoutings 'mongst its people,
There were tears and there was weeping;
Not the tears of the defeated,
But the tears of joy and victory.
There was honor for Abe Lincoln,
For the good that he'd accomplished
For the Negro and the Union,
For this country and its people.

And the Negroes left their masters,
Quit the scenes of early childhood,
Quit the sunny old plantation,
Quit with sorrow and rejoicing.
Scattred 'round about the country,
Sorrowing 'cause they loved their masters,
Spite of all the cruel treatment,
Spite of all the scars and bruises
That their masters left upon them
Be it said, much to their credit,
All the masters were not cruel.
Some were good and kind and gentle
To their slaves and household servants,
To the ones who toiled to help them.
Some of them were quite devoted
To their good and faithful Negroes;
Would not let them be mistreated
By a cruel overseer;
Treated them the same as family,
Sharing with them food and raiment,
Giving everything they needed
For protection 'gainst the weather
And to satisfy their hunger.
And the Negroes loved such masters,
Did 'most everything to please them;
And they left them with reluctance
When the civil war was ended,
When the slavery days were over.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Lincoln was a noble statesman,
Good and great and full of wisdom.
He it was that saved the Union,
He it was that freed the Negro.
And to him they should pay homage,
Never cease to do him honor,
Never criticise his actions,
Never quarrel or feel offended,
'Cause he did not talk to suit them.
Understand that he was cautious,
Could not speak the feelings in him,
Had to hide his real motives,
Else he could not save the Union,
Else he could not free the Negroes.
Read his life and read his history,
And you 'll learn the goodness in him,
Learn his chief desires and wishes
Toward this evil of the country;
What he said in early childhood,
How he 'd smite this institution,
What an awful blow he 'd hit it,

So the Negro gained his freedom,
Through the goodness of Abe Lincoln
Let us praise him, let us love him,
For he richly doth deserve it.
Let the world fall down and worship
At the shrine of Abraham Lincoln—
Abraham Lincoln, that great statesman;
Abraham Lincoln, that great martyr;
Abraham Lincoln, herald of freedom,
In the Southland of America!

Essays

VITAL FACTORS IN THE GROWTH OF CIVILIZATION.

My Graduating Oration, delivered in June, 1897.

We to-day, at the beginning of the twentieth century, can look back into ages that have passed, and in the far distance we can behold the rise and fall of nations; we can see cities built up firm and compact to-day, but to-morrow crumbled to the very ground upon which they stood; we can look upon dreadful battle-fields, and see the bodies of fallen braves bleeding and writhing in the throes of death; we can see masters scourging their slaves; we can hear the cry for mercy from the poor and oppressed of all nations; we can see the Church struggling for existence and supremacy; we can see many forms of government spring up and try to predominate, but, like bubbles upon the mighty deep, they are soon blotted out of existence.

Then, after having thus observed, we begin to philospohize, and try to seek out the causes and the nature of the causes that have brought about

these direful results; why nations have risen and fallen; why cities have collapsed; why war and tumult have shattered empires and kingdoms; why societies have been disorganized and governments have been broken up.

To investigate the matter further, we take a second look adown the dim vista of time, and in the far distance we can see the outlines of a rugged path winding its way through the distant ages. It continues in an onward course, widening here and narrowing there, until finally it reaches and spreads itself round about us. This path may be known as the path of Civilization. Just as the mighty rivers which flow through our continents have left their marks and traces upon the mountains and steep cliffs, the valleys and fertile plains, so has Civilization, in her onward march, indelibly stamped herself and character upon the remote ages and the beaten shores of time. And the disasters mentioned in the beginning are not disasters simply, but they represent the steps trodden by Civilization in her onward march.

Civilization is defined as a condition of human community characterized by political and social organization, advancement in knowledge, wealth, and refinement, the arts, literature, and science. In a more general idea, it is an improved condi-

tion of man resulting from the establishment of social order in place of the individual independence and lawlessness of savage or barbarous life. It consists of two principles, two characteristics—individual progress and social amelioration. These two principles are vital factors in the growth and evolution of Civilization. Without them states and nations cannot exist, empires and kingdoms must fall, and disorder, violence, and barbarism will prevail. They are as essential to life and the growth of a nation as the organs of respiration are to the body.

After four thousand years of strife and conflict, we find that Egypt had developed a civilization, the first recorded upon the pages of history. In many things it surpassed ours. When it was at its height, art, literature and science flourished, manufactories and industries were operated, and general enlightenment and intelligence characterized her time. But, unfortunately for this country, certain things which attend Civilization in her onward march are things which drag nations down. Discontent, desire to rule, ambition, amalgamation, are things which develop Civilization. And Egypt, like other nations that have become a victim to an excess of these qualities, tottered, and, after a few declin-

ing years, war and tumult, ambition of kings, non-unity, and amalgamation of people, discontinued the empire, whose achievements and accomplishments furnish the first topics to go down upon the pages of history. Says one, "Her mission among nations was fulfilled. She had lit the torch of Civilization in ages inconceivably remote, and had passed it on to other people of the West."

What is true of Egypt is none the less true of other countries. Greece and Rome had their day of prosperity and adversity. They experienced infancy, they experienced youth, and, like a thief in the night, old age came and found them torn and rent asunder on account of disobedience and disregard for the laws of Civilization.

Then surely, if this be the case with other nations, it devolves upon us as citizens to look after and study for the development of these two principles—individual progress and social amelioration. It devolves upon us as citizens to advance ourselves individually and to help others to advance; for if we fail in this, then proud America, who now stands foremost in the rank of nations, and whose torch of progress, like the burning sun, sends its rays of gleaming light throughout the world, will fail, fail, and go down with other nations to mingle with the wreckage that marks the

footprints of the fleeting ages. Let us remember that our country is not invincible, neither are its people infallible.

It was in the fifth century when Rome fell at the hands of the barbarians. Her pride, her splendor, her magnificence, and her all fell with her, only to be replaced by the rude, uncouth, and degenerate habits of the barbarians.

The history of European civilization dates from this period. We may trace it from the fall of the Roman Empire to the present date, and we shall find that war, slavery, tyranny, and things which are characteristic of modern civilization were impelling forces in European civilization. They brought about revolution, and revolution brought about reformation, and reformation made civilization what it is to-day.

The first phase of European civilization that presents itself to us is that of the feudal system, a tyrannical form of government which sprang up under the existing circumstances. It was a form of government which oppressed the poor and made them serfs and slaves to nobles. They were held apart. They had no way by which they could exchange views and ideas, and as a result social and political organization was made impossible. This wretched state of affairs exist-

ed for some centuries, when finally a second phase or condition presented itself. This phase was marked by general dissatisfaction. Uprisings and revolutions were of frequent occurrence. All Europe was in an uproar. All attempts to re-establish an empire were void of result. War and tumult, disorder and violence, seemed to be the chief occupation of men. And not until the eve of the eleventh century, when the Crusade movement was brought about and agitated by Peter the Hermit, did this unsettled state of affairs cease to exist.

Yea, it ceased when all Europe became united, when all minds centered on one thought, and all hands worked in common for the accomplishment of a single purpose. Then, when unity was established, when the minds of the people had become centralized, when the interest of one man became the interest of another, when selfishness and disregard for the rights of other was laid aside, then civilization, like the American eagle, took an upward flight, and began to soar higher and higher, penetrating farther and farther into the realms of infinity. In the language of another: "With want destroyed, with greed changed to noble passion, with fraternity that is born of equality taking the place of the jealousy and fear that ar-

ray men against each other, with mental powers loosed by conditions that give to the humblest comfort and leisure, and who shall measure the height to which our civilization may soar?

"Words fail the thought. It is the golden age of which poets have sung and high-raised seers have told in metaphor; it is the glorious vision which has always haunted men with gleams of fitful splendor; it is what he saw at Patmos whose eyes were closed in a trance, it is the culmination of Christianity, the city of God on earth, with its walls of jasper and its gates of pearl; it is the reign of the Prince of Peace."

THE PERPETUITY OF THE RACE.

I am glad to know that the Negroes of the United States are rapidly becoming educated. I am glad to know that they have commenced to write books, print papers, and make a literature and history for themselves; that they have begun to look after such things as are essential to the culture and refinement of a country or a nation; that the leaders of the race have begun to study such things as will have a tendency to join the people together in social ties and social bonds which are characteristic of a prosperous and growing people, and which have so sadly been neglected in the Negro race.

I am indeed glad that a change is being wrought, such a change as will mark a new era in Negro civilization, and vouch for the perpetuity of the race.

Too long have we, as a race, neglected those principles which are vital factors in the growth and evolution of civilization; too long have we neglected ourselves individually; too long have we, as a race, neglected ourselves collectively.

And the day will soon come whose dawning is already upon us like the red glare of the morning sun upon the eastern horizon, when we, as a race, must learn that all our growth, all our strength, and all our prosperity depends upon these two principles—individual progress and social amelioration.

These two principles are vital factors in the growth and evolution of civilization. Without them states and nations cannot exist, empires and kingdoms must fall, and disorder, violence, and barbarism prevail. They are as essential to the life and growth of nations as are the organs of respiration to the body. And permit me to say that it devolves upon us, as a race whose growth, whose prosperity, whose very existence is at stake, to look after and study for the development of these two principles.

It devolves upon us, as a race, to advance ourselves individually and to advance ourselves collectively; and if we fail in this, then the Negro race will be a failure; then will our churches, our societies, and our institutions of learning be void of result. All our labors will have been in vain, and the so-called "Negro problem" must remain forever unsolved.

I, for one, can truthfully say that I have the interest of the Negro race at heart. I desire to see a new and inverted order of things. I desire to see selfishness, superstition, envy, and mistrust entirely eliminated from the affairs of the Negro, and in their stead a broadness of mind, a loftiness of thought, a nobleness of character, backed up by more moral courage and strength, in order that we may be better able to do justice not only to ourselves, not only to our fellow-men, not only to the race with which we are connected, but to the Almighty One, "in whom we live and move."

SELFISHNESS.

Selfishness is a most detestable sin, and if there is any one thing above another that I desire to see crushed in the affairs of men, it is selfishness. It is an evil or curse that is as certain to ruin the conditions of a country or a people as the rottenness of one apple is to destroy a barrel. It is as destructive to a nation as wood-worms to a vessel that rides the waves of the mighty deep.

When the motto, "Everyone for himself and no one for his neighbor," is exercised, when personal interest or advantage is the chief aim to be desired, there can be no honesty in religion, politics, or trade. In the language of another: "When pictures are painted and books are written for money alone, when laborers take no pleasure in their work save for the wages it brings, when no enthusiasm is shown in anything except the accumulation of wealth, and when all the finer sentiments and nobler instincts of man are made subject to self-worship, who is so blind or so mad as to think good can come of it?"

slaves; we can hear the cry for mercy from the Nothing but evil upon evil can accrue from such a system. And to-day let us be warned against it. Let selfishness, above all things, be eliminated from the affairs of our race

SUPERSTITION, ENVY, AND MISTRUST.

These qualities are the enemies of progress wherever they are exercised freely, without shame or the consciousness of the harm there is in them, they are very undesirable. They are qualities inherent to too great extent in the Negro race to-day. They can be only too plainly observed in every-day life in every city, town, village, or hamlet; in our schools, churches, conventions—in short, in every organization where leadership and confidence are necessary; and if we ever hope to become a great people, if we ever hope to receive recognition from our superiors in culture and refinement, if we ever hope to increase in power, wealth, and worthily accumulated things, we must eliminate these unbecoming and ungodlike qualities from our minds and hearts. We must have for our motto, "Not for self alone, but for others, do I live." We must at all times assist our brothers to rise, rather than pull them down.

EDUCATION.

Education develops enthusiasm and the appreciation of lofty things. It has a refining effect upon the tastes of man, and not only gives him a better insight into the beauties of nature which surround him in his daily life, making him see "sermons in stones, books in running brooks, and good in everything," but it also makes him better able to grappel with the stern realities, the difficult problems, and the many responsibilities of life. It can answer a two-fold purpose against the enemy: it is both a sword and a shield; and it would be well for every American Negro, if possible, to thus arm himself. It can secure more rights and privileges than the shotgun or the ballot-box. It is a passport into the good graces and confidence of all men. Say what you will, it is the salvation of the Negro in America. It is the one essential part necessary for the solution of the "race problem," and hence we should not hesitate to seize every opportunity for mental development and self-culture, that we may be better, broader, and more useful citizens and secure the respect and confidence of those who too often misjudge us.

Trained and upright leadership is in great demand. We need men of culture and good character in every walk and community of life. Our schools and our pulpits should be filled with wise and intelligent women and men, in order that they may point out the way clearly and inspire their following with lofty thoughts and noble purposes. We cannot have too many such leaders. Our leaders, as a rule, are lacking the qualities necessary for the culture and refinement of people. Too many of them are unschooled in the habits of honesty and uprightness. They are too eager for self-praise and self-aggrandizement. So eager sometimes that they will overstep all law, both of God and man, to satisfy their greed and selfish natures.

Down with such leaders! Let us establish a new set. Let us support men for leadership who have talent and preparation, who practice the virtues and not the vices of life, who are broad in mind, lofty in thought, and noble in character; men who have moral courage and moral strength; men who are able and willing to do justice, not only to themselves, but to their fellow-men. Yes, men who respect their word as they do their bond—high-classed, dignified men.

Good and great leaders are much in demand,

LET US STOP AND CONSIDER

It is only too true that we belong to a down-trodden race; that we are permitted to possess but a few of this world's goods; that we are drawers of water and hewers of wood for our superiors, and all we get we must earn by the sweat of our own brows; but, my dear friends, I am prepared to say that more money is made and handled by the Negro race than is suspected or actually known.

There are among our race to-day young men who have made and spent small fortunes in the last decade; made and spent them lavishly and recklessly; made and spent them in gambling-hells and vicious dives of sin; made and spent them in trying to keep up with every foolish fad and fashion brought out. They, with no little credit, belong to the proudest race under the shining sun, and they have spent their money in wearing patent leather shoes, standing collars, silk cravats, and the costliest clothes made by hand of a tailor; and as a result—nothing is left them.

Young men, suppose we stop a moment and consider the matter. Let us note the evil effects that such a standard of living is having upon us. We, as a race, are very poor, and living up to such a standard can only make us poorer. We must look more closely after our nickels and dimes and twenty-five-cent pieces, and if we have to spend them, let us do so in support of our little brothers and sisters at home. Let us spend them on our old grayhaired fathers and mothers, who have seen their best days, who have long reached and passed the zenith of their lives, and are now upon the descent toward a second childhood; let us spend them in decorating our homes, in planting trees and beautiful flowers around about our doors; let us spend them in buying good books to read in the education of ourselves; let us invest them in savings-banks and loan associations, that we may be prepared for the rainy days that are sure to come when we least expect them.

And as we are proud, let us continue to be so; but let us also remember that we are poor, and that we cannot be otherwise so long as we indulge in this high living. Let us wean ourselves from the habits of extravagance, intemperance, dissipation, and vice.

A PRACTICAL SERMON.

It has often been said that a Negro dwelling-house can be recognized as far as it can be seen. Whether this be true or not I am unprepared to say; but I do know, and so do you, that some of us are not as neat and tidy around our homes as we might be. As a rule, the front yards of some of our homes are tolerably nice, but by no means beautiful, while the back yard is a most horrible sight to look upon. Oh, how awful, how repulsive, how full of ugly sights and things that have no earthly value, are some of our back yards!

Move that box of old shoes, that bunch of dirty rags, that old bucket of lime, that old kit of ashes, that bottomless chair, that rusty piece of stovepipe, that old iron hoop, that old greasy slop-barrel, that old rust-eaten wash-boiler, that old coal-scuttle, that broken hoe and shovel, that rat-trap, that sausage-grinder, that sawbuck, that stick of cordwood, that old broken washbowl, that old burnt-out stove, that old window-sash, that old door-screen with its rusty wire torn loose, that old ragged and dusty piece of carpet, that

old chintz sofa, that old pile of boards full of dangerous rusty nails, that old rocking-chair, that old plow, that old mowing blade; move those wretched sights, I say, and life itself will be brighter for you. The speculator will see fifty percent more value in your property, you will pay a debt you owe to civilization, and you will alter, oh! ever so much, the general opinion, that the characteristic of all "niggers" is to be be low and degraded.

THINK, WATCH, AND ACT.

We do not mean to speak disparagingly of our race, but there are many shortcomings and disagreeable traits that might be remedied if properly, or, in other words, in a not too critical or offensive manner pointed out.

Our people as a race are by no means harmful or vicious, as some papers and persons of the other race are continually setting forth; but, on the other hand, they are ever aspiring and have good intentions deeply rooted in their nature.

But there is a class who in pleasures and pastimes, social and business dealings, are thoughtless and short-sighted, but not always intentionally harmful. We know men who hold high places, both in the social and intellectual world, who stand out boldly and conspicuously in this class.

They too often act or speak before they think, or, if they do think, it is only on the momentary good or pleasure that they hope to gain. They lose sight of future welfare and happiness, and

to think in the interest of the mass or of the other fellow is quite out of the question.

It is to this class of persons principally that we address ourselves. Of course, dear reader, if you do not come under this head, there is no reason whatever for you to feel offended. And to those who may feel the force of our utterances, there should be no reason for offense, since it is in the kindliest spirit and for the good of all that we speak.

Now, with our desires and intentions thus set forth, we hope it is understood that we are not arrogant or assumptive. We know full well that we have not the power or authority to compel the right or to censure the wrong, but we do feel it our duty, as a mouthpiece for the people, to kindly but firmly hint at some of the many things that are holding us down as a race and are causing us to be branded as an undesirable and inferior people. Indeed, there are those of the Vardaman and Tillman type who accuse us of being a wholly unreliable, selfish, envious, ignorant, superstitious people, void of moral principle or even common decency.

Naturally this causes our blood to boil, and we resent it with all the pride and manhood of our natures. But it is "up to" us to study our-

selves and see how much of this criticism is unjust and untrue, if the other race has any grounds whatever for hurling these insults and bitter tirades which strike to the very quick of our being. It is "up to" each individual to examine himself thoroughly and see if he has any one or a dozen of those undesirable traits which go to make up the sum total of these bitter accusations. A search of the person of an honest man will not hurt.

Let us take a fair and honest inventory of our stock and store. Let us go into secret meditation and find out for ourselves if any of these unworthy and ungodlike qualities lurk in our natures, and if we find them there, let us relieve our conscience by a secret resolve something like this: "I will ever be on my guard, and in my dealings with both my own and other races, in my conduct on the street, in public buildings and public conveyances, will never do or say anything to reflect discredit on myself or my people."

"I fully realize that the eyes of the world are upon us, that we are on our good behavior as men and women, and that it is "up to" us to prove by our conduct that these vicious attacks upon our character as a people are false and an awful injustice to us." Then if, after we have done our best, they continue to malign and censure us, we can easily guess the reason why.

WE MUST MAKE FRIENDS.

It is often said by persons of the other race that there is nothing in the Negro; that he is full of bluff and pretension; that he is buoyed up and carried along by the great tide of civilization in which he chances to exist, and if left upon his own resources, he could not stand, but would fall as swiftly and as surely as young birds hurled from their nests ere the growth of their wings is complete; that, in other words, his seeming progress is not real, but imaginary, and no less so to him than to many of the other race, and that the day is close at hand when his strength is to be tested.

Now the question arises, "Are we ready for the test?" We think that the following figures will prove much of the real progress made by the Negro in the past forty years; that his growth is steady and sure; and that with a little care and caution along business lines, with an increase of moral strength and courage, and with a fuller knowledge and a greater heed to the old adage,

"Honesty is the best policy," when the test comes, he will be equal to it.

These figures, as gleaned from the reports of the Presbyterian General Assembly that was held in our city, will show much of the real progress that the Negroes in this country have made:

"Nearly 4,000,000 Negroes are engaged in profitable occupations; nearly 45 per cent, as compared with 37 per cent in the white race. More than 7,000 operate farms; 25 per cent of these farms are owned by the Negroes working them. The records show that the country has 21,000 Negro carpenters, 20,000 barbers, 15,000 stone masons, 10,000 engineers and firemen, 10,000 blacksmiths, 2,000 lawyers, 2,000 dentists, and 2,000 preachers."

This is a splendid showing. But we must not allow these figures or statistics to delude or mislead us; we must remember that we are in the midst of a mighty people, shrewd, sagacious, foresighted, and observing, and, at our best, we will be at our wits' end to cope with them. We must learn to study them as they study us. We must make friends of them. How to do this should be the uppermost thought in the minds of all our leaders. Our first step along this line should be to eliminate all prejudice and ill-feeling from

our own hearts. We must favor them wherver we can without sacrificing principles or manhood. We must learn to sympathize more and to rebuke less. We must remember that a vast change has been wrought in our lives in the last forty years. Much has been done for us, and our murmurings and seeming ingratitude tend only to exhaust even the patience of some of our best friends. *We must study to please and sympathize with the other race.* And when we have lifted ourselves to such a plane, they cannot oppress us, they cannot resist us; for they are human and can but yield to the laws and promptings which govern in the human breast.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE OF MANHOOD.

Wherever I go, whatever I do, whatever I see, I am continually confronted with the question, What constitutes a true man? What are the true principles of manhood?

Were it not for the fact that we are dwelling in a serious time, and that great political truths are constantly being sought and are constantly in demand, we might allow these questions to pass from our view into philosophical hands, where some dreamer might meditate over them for centuries and centuries unmolested. This is impossible; the age demands their solution at once. Something must be done to check the advance of fraud, graft, and dishonest practices. We must choose the right kind of men to face the coming issues, to lead us through the coming storms; men in whom we can put implicit confidence, without fear of the monuments of justice, mercy, and truth being trodden under foot.

Wherever such a man is found, in whatever vocation of life he may be, the world will fall and worship at his feet. In order that he may be

found, he must show to the world that he possesses that properly developed manhood, those stern and true principles which serve as a beconlight to a beautiful world, a blessing to mankind.

Where can we find manhood that will endure? Not in the man who has for his motto, "The accumulation of wealth at any price;" not in the scholar who spends his days in constant research, and leaves nothing that will benefit the world in which he has lived; not in the patriot who loves his country better than his fellow-men, who loves his flag better than his neighbor, or who loves his nation better than he does his God.

But where? In the lives and principles of a God-inspired Lincoln and the honest, noble, and true patriots, Lovejoy, Sumner, and Phillips, and many other sincere, noble, and Christian patriots, whose names live in the history of this country and whose epitaph is written in the hearts of men.

Let us go back to the early days of this Republic and study the lives and characters of such men as these. Let us study what they learned, let us uphold what they maintained, let us breathe the atmosphere in which they lived. Here we will be able to answer this question which confronts us, and will be able to tell the world of a

noble alliance or combination which goes to make up a properly developed manhood.

With this question once answered and constantly placed before the hosts of young men and women who hold up the highest bulwarks of state, then the solemn, mysterious old philosopher of past days need not, with lantern in hand, stroll the streets of his native city looking for an honest man. We need not then hesitate, we need not meditate, we need not then lament when asked, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Regardless of sect, creed, or race, we, as American citizens, should lift our faces toward the high heavens and be thankful to God for such noble thoughts, such noble principles, and such sublime manhood.

Thankful to God that we live under the protection of the flag of this country, where these men lived and died, let us for a moment forget the modern world with its complex problems and stern realities and study the martyrdom of our past history. "The future is not dead to the man who has studied the past ,and knows how the present came to be what it is," says Mr. Macaulay, and I believe that those same principles which caused Grecian civilization to live and Roman liberty to flourish, which caused the Saxons

to enter Britain and Luther to go to Rome, which accompanied the dying Swiss patriots at Margarten Pass and the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock, are as sacred bulwarks for the future as they have been for the past. Grecian sculpture now lies buried in the tongueless silence of the dreamless past, and only a few remnants of that glorious civilization remain. The explorers of the world now dig for marble down beneath the ruins of the old Roman Forum. Vast fields of golden grain now wave in the breeze over the land where brave Spartans fought and died.

The pass of Thermopylæ now welcomes the curious travelers, who go their way mindful of the braves who sleep on either side; Saxon and Roman blood has long since been washed from the fields of Hastings; but the three principles—intellect, industry, and patriotism—which survived those crucial periods in the world's history, form the great alliance on which the destiny of the world hangs to-day. The men whose names are immortal in our own dear history are the men in whose earthly tenements these principles dwelt ,and at whose death they were left as a rich legacy for unborn generations.

To know is not to conquer; to work is not to conquer; to be true is not to conquer. The young

man who led his class in the university, who is graduated with the honors of his class, and who goes forth into the world confident of success merely because of his intellect, is doomed to disappointment. The world owes him nothing for his scholarship; he is in debt to the world even more than his duller classmates. The young man who struggles day after day and night after night like the beast of burden as it plods its weary way, with no object in view, no lofty aims to attain, with nothing to do but work, is not only a failure, but he holds in check the civilization of the time in which he lives.

The young man who goes forth to fight the battles of his country because he loves his country, right or wrong, because he wants to see his country gain dominion over all the world, is not the kind of man our country needs to-day; such a patriot is more of a menace to the commonwealth than the battleships of a foreign enemy. But the young man who carries with him this triple alliance of intellect, the jewel of the soul; industry, the backbone of civilization; and a patriotism which embodies the cry, "My country right, to keep it right, and wrong to be made right," is the individual who carries with him the properly developel manhood for which the ages yearn.

Wrapped in such an armour, he may be assailed with the storms of popular disapprobation on every hand; but, like the leader of the God-favored Isrealites, crying out in the wilderness, he will be borne up by these principles and assuredly he will triumph in the end. Wars may come, and he will stand unharmed in the front of battle. San Franciscos may tremble from center to circumference, they may be dragged in the mire of political corruption, and an angry God may send bubonic plagues upon disobedient citizens; but he will build up stronger and greater municipalities. The temples of art, science, and commerce may be destroyed, but in a few days he will build them up again. Like a star in the darkness of night, he travels his journey through the thickest of the gloom, leaving the light of truth, the glory of industry, and the radiance of patriotism in his wake.

These are the principles of manhood that will endure; these are the stepping-stones by which we may reach through up to manhood's God and learn "the divine love by the human." These are the principles which sooner or later will carse the former slave and his master to meet and clasp hands on one common level.

This is the alliance which will do away with the North, South, and unbounded West, the white

man and the black man. It admits of no sectional hatred, no racial distinction, no previous condition of servitude.

I may subject myself to severe criticism when I say that we, as a people, as we grow in intellect and industry, let us complete the alliance by growing in the love of country. I am aware of the fact that there are gray-haired mothers and fathers under the sound of my voice who are still brooding over wrongs they suffered during the dark days of American bondage. There are in this intelligent audience this evening young men and young women smarting under the humiliation heaped upon our people. The modern prejudice imposed upon our people is far more threatening and foreboding than the dark and sorrowful bondage through which they emerged in the dark days of '61.

But, my friends, throughout it all let us learn that the Constitution of our country is capable of a grander and nobler mission. Let us strive to make it what it should be. Let us see within it only three principles, this noble alliance—intellect, industry, and patriotism.

Let us love this land of opportunity if it *is* inhabited by people who do not love us. Let us reverence the Stars and Stripes if we are *not* re-

spected under its folds. After all, is there not a just God who is watching the destines of His people? Did He not say to those who would suffer for the right, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay"!

I am firm in my convictions, that if we are industrious, intelligent, and patriotic citizens, doing our duty toward God, home, and native land, true to one another and true to the principles which have lived in the past, there will come forth a modern Lincoln, ever mindful of our honest lives, our noble deeds, and our lofty ideals, crying out to our persecutors and to men who would forever close the door of hope in our face, "Just so far shalt thou go, and no farther." Then foreign nations will cry out, "The true American is the black man still wandering from the dark continent of ignorance and oblivion, ever loyal to his country's needs."

They tell us, young people, we cannot win. They tell us God never intended it to be so. They tell us the curse of generations past and generations yet unborn is written on our foreheads. They go still farther and tell us that from beneath our dark-hued skins there often creep out in all their hideousness the instincts of the brute. If these accusations be false, let us an-

swer not; but if we possess true manhood, we will ask the thinking world to enter us in the race of life. Like Rhythmic, the blind steed who challenged the admiration of the world by winning the grand Chamber of Commerce stakes in the city of Detroit, we cannot see the course on which we are to race; we cannot see the tape which we must cross to win. We are blind—blind to our competitors, blind to our surroundings, blind to the future, blind to the past, blind to the present. We hear the hisses of the Vardamans and Tillmans on every hand. We hear millions crying out that the odds are against us; we hear thousands predicting our defeat. We cannot see the course. We feel that beneath our feet the track is firm, and we resolve to run with patience the race. The race is on. We hear the encouragement of our Master, and we place confidence in His guidance. By intelligence we know the importance of the occasion; industry, the mainspring of success, compels us to strain every nerve to win; and true American patriotism, true American citizenship, will bring home the victory in the kingdom of our God.

E. A. SHACKELFORD.

Poems.

THE LINCOLN INSTITUTE FIRE.

One summer eve, about half-past eight,
News came to me which I loathe to relate;
For northing more appalling to my ears could resound
Than that famous Old Lincoln had burned to the ground;
The famous Old Lincoln, where for years I had gone,
The old-fashioned building that had stood there so long.

I listened in silence, I felt very sad;
I could form no expression, except "'Tis too bad!"
For ne'er did I think that such a rare fate
Our famous Old Lincoln should ever o'ertake;
The famous Old Lincoln, with its majestic old walls,
The old-fashioned building and its winding halls.

Daily I've sat there for many terms past;
I remember my first day as well as my last;
But I can never sit there in another class,
For proud Old Lincoln has seen her last;
That famous Old Lincoln, that I loved so well,
That old-fashioned building and its clear-ringing
bell.

I imagine I see her as I climb the high hill,
I imagine I see the architect's skill;
But when the truth dawns, as it always will,
Old Lincoln lies there in her ashes still;
The famous Old Lincoln on her beautiful ground,
The old-fashioned building of ancient renown.

I loved her, I loved her, but now she has gone,
To number with buildings in a different form;
For in ashes and cinders, a sight to alarm,
Old Lincoln was left during a thunder-storm;
The famous Old Lincoln, the noblest in group,
The old-fashioned building called Lincoln
Institute.

THE POETS.

Oh, what fine and lofty feelings,
  Ever in the poet's mind,
Like the dreams of night are stealing!
  For in him a friend they find;
For in him they know they're welcome;
  Even as a thief they come.
He delights to give expression,
  Love and cherish every one.

Love and grief and desolation,
  Joy and pain and hope, despair,
Find in him a consolation
  That cannot be found elsewhere.
He's the chief, the king of nations,
  Doctor, lawyer, priest, and seer;
Helps the high and low in stations,
  Gives to all a word in cheer.

Let us praise our ancient Muses,
  Let us love our modern ones;
Let the books the young one uses
  Come from God's inspiring sons.
If you want to see God's glory,
  Want to sit around His throne,
Want to hear that sad sweet story,
  Told by His beloved Son,
Let us listen to our poets,
  As they sing redemption's song;
For God's love they surely know it,
  And with angels they belong.

OUR SOULS.

Oh, restless souls of men, pent up
In clayey shells on earth,
Like prisoners there within have lived,
And longed and pined since birth.
Unhappy spirits, they, bound up
In painful clayey moulds,
Are subjects to the toils and snares,
And ills and griefs untold.

While in these wretched troubles hurled,
They cry for their release;
They're longing for sweet freedom's sphere,
They want to dwell in peace.
They love the homeland of the soul,
They hate this dusty den,
They want to join their wondrous whole,
And quit the walks of men.

They're roused by music's softest strain,
By poet's sweetest lay,
To try to break the cords in twain,
Which keep them bound in clay.
Oh, upward swift and sure they'd fly,
Were't not for earthly weights.
They're ever struggling toward the sky
From things they loathe and hate.

"Say not farewell, my angel Love,
say not farewell to me;
It breaks my heart to think of such,
O, Love, we must agree."

A LOVER'S PLEA.

Say not farewell, my angel love,
  Say not farewell to me;
Just wait a little moment, dear;
  Let's see 'f we can't agree.

I love you, Grace, my darling one,
  I love with all my heart;
And oh, the bitter pain it gives
  To think that we must part!

We've been so much together, love,
  We've spent such happy hours;
We've wandered 'mid the sylvan scenes,
  We've gathered fruits and flowers.

We've sat upon the mossy banks
  Of silvery flowing streams,
And told each other of our love
  Till lost in blissful dreams,

Then must our vows be broken, dear,
And must our hopes be dead?
Are we to part forever—
In spite of all we've said?

Say not farewell, my angel love,
Say not farewell to me;
It breaks my heart to think of such—
Oh, love, we must agree!

THE WAIL OF THE WANDERER.

Out on the deep sea of life we're cast,
Far from out home and friends, alas!
Far from our childhood's haunts and scenes,
Far from our first life's happy dreams;
Far from a tender mother's care,
Far from our brothers and sisters dear.
Out in the world, so cold and cruel,
Where crusts of bread are costly jewels;
Where fallen leaves and earthly beds
Are welcome places for our heads.

Misery, why lurk'st thou on our way?
Why hauntest both by night and day?
Are we by fate to tortune doomed?
Are thus our lives to be consumed?
Is this your mission, to destroy
A father's pride, a mother's joy?
We once were pure as the morning dew,
We yet have hearts so sad but true.

Beneath these rags, all tattered and torn,
That cover the forms of wretches forlorn,
Far from the things of earthly care,
Far from the sins that flesh is heir,
'Way deep down in our humble hearts,
Like smoldering ashes, are manly sparks.
Think not we're void of heart or soul—
Our names may be on Heaven's roll;
And when the angel Gabriel calls,
A host of tramps may lead you all.

"We once were pure as the morning dew."

THE PASSING OF SPAIN.

Let's sing of Dewey's wondrous feat,
  Let's sing of Sampson's glory,
And Hobson's name we must repeat
  In telling this great story.
Who leads in brave and noble deeds?
  Who is the greatest fighter?
Which one our country doth most need
  In making Cuba brighter?

It's hard for anyone to say;
  They've all been quite victorious,
And by and by there'll come a day
  When ends their work laborious.
By and by there'll come a day
  When Spain shall live no longer,
When Spanish rule and Spanish sway
  Must yield to nations stronger.

By and by there'll come a day
  When her old banner tattered
Must fall and trail upon the clay,
  With dust and blood bespattered.
The Stars and Stripes shall wave serene,
  O'er Cuba once benighted,
And Spanish war and cruel scenes
  Can only be recited.

A TRIBUTE TO LINCOLN INSTITUTE.

On lovely eves in sunny May
Our rapturous souls are borne away
To realms of bliss and joy untold,
By Nature's scenes and workmen's mold.

These lovely eves like lusty dreams,
These lofty hills and flowing streams,
These flowers and lilies 'round the brooks,
These grassy plains and shady nooks,
These towers and turrets high and bold,
These dwellings new, these dwellings old,
Like visions fall upon our gaze
From "Lincoln's" lofty heights and ways.

We love thee, "Lincoln," for thy site;
We love thee for thy sweet delight;
We love thee for thy gentle breeze;
We love thee for thy spreading trees;
We love thee ever and anon,
Because thou art Dame Nature's home.

And when we go away from thee,
To fight upon life's rugged sea,
When clouds of darkness 'round us roll,
And hide from us our waiting goal,
We'll think of thee, O lovely place,
Where rapture meets us face to face.

THE DEPLORABLE END OF A TEN-CENT SHOW.

'Twas on a mild September day,
When autumn times were coming,
When men had finished raking hay,
And bees were softly humming,
That to our town there came a show—
As some do still remember
With faces bright and cheeks aglow—
With leaper, clown, and bender.

When first they came upon the ground,
Their plunder they unloaded;
From carts and wagons strewn around,
Their canvas they unfolded.
Then men soon at their tasks were bent,
With power and will undaunted;
To drive the stakes and hoist a tent,
No idle hands are wanted.

They drove their stakes into the ground
With sledges large and heavy;
Made fast their ropes and laid them down,
Until a ring was ready.
And when a ring was made complete,
They to the center gathered
And raised a pole—full sixty feet
In altitude it measured.

The pole was called the center-pole,
On 'count of its position;
Some other poles, called quarter-poles,
Had yet to fill a mission.
The canvas 'round the center-pole
Was spread with unfurled edges;
The ropes were fastened in a hole,
And stakes drove deep with sledges.

Then up the pole the canvas flew,
Until it reached its station;
The other poles were forced in too,
And made an elevation.
And now the work was almost done,
Behold the great pavilion;
The curtains 'round the sides were hung—
'Twould hold a half a million.

It took about a half an hour
To fix the high trapezes,
The springing-board and turning-bar,
And many a thing that pleases.
And now the members of the band,
Their part must be remembered;
They took their drums and horns in hand
And pretty music rendered.

Then off they marched with steps so gay,
And through the streets paraded,
Some dressed in blue, some dressed in gray,
Some in garments old and faded.
And when they'd gone all over town
And to the tent returnèd,
There was a man with red tights on
To walk the rope we learnèd.

We waited but a little while,
Upon the rope he hastened,
And by a pleasant bow and smile
A friendly feeling wakened.
We marveled at his daring feat,
We praised his exhibition;
He' doing work so nice and neat,
Deserved a good position.

And now that things had turned out well,
And all the folks were pleasèd,
Reserved seat cards they had to sell,
So some in soft chairs easèd.
Good acting seemed to be the aim
Throughout the whole proceeding;
They had achieved a goodly name,
Nor were they now receding.

The folks went home that afternoon
With hearts all gay and lighter;
They said they'd eat their supper soon,
And come back looking brighter.
They said they knew the show'd be good,
They'd never see a better;
And come that night they swore they would,
In spite of wind or weather.

That evening came and all were there;
The tent was overflowing
With young and old, with maidens fair,
And little babes a-crowing.
It was a grand and glorious sight
To see the people seated
And hear the titters of delight,
"That ne'er might be repeated."

The hour grew late; the band began
To play some pretty dances;
They opened up the night's program
By twirling of the lances.

Long ere the show had thus begun
A storm had been a-brewin';
The clouds bedimmed the setting sun
And threatened rain and ruin.
So silently that no one knew
Was it in concentration,
And like the troops at Waterloo,
Leaped forth with desperation.

The lightning flashed, the thunder roared,
The wind began a-blowing,
The rain in mighty torrents poured,
And streams began a-flowing.
'Twas evident to those inside,
Disaster soon would follow;
The women screamed, and children cried,
And men began to hollow.

The mighty tent tossed to and fro,
Like waves upon the ocean;
Began to yield and weaker grow,
From wind and its commotion;
The center-pole began to lash,
It seemed now almost falling;
Then all at once a mighty crash—
What followed was appalling!

For followed soon a muffled yell,
Such cries were quite distressing;
"The moans, the groans, the dreadful knell,"
Were to one's soul depressing.
The tent at last had gone to ground;
It could withstand no longer
The mighty winds which played around
And ever waxèd stronger.

The people rushed towards the door,
They trampled on each other;
There was a great and loud uproar,
And some were about to smother.
And when the clouds had all rolled by
And raining had abated,
And when the wind had ceased to sigh,
A wreck had been created.

And when it all had cleared away,
And when the cost was reckoned,
They found that there was naught to pay,
For angels no one beckoned.
The folks, all wringing wet and sad,
Were toward their homes a-groping;
Some were thankful, and some were mad
Because they got a soaking.

The moon up in the skies serene,
The stars with eyes a-twinkling,
Looked down upon the wretched scene,
A-winking and a-blinking.

LIFE A DREAM.

Life is but a fleeting dream,
Full of ever-changing scenes;
Full of phantoms and of frights,
Some few pleasures and delights.

Sudden changes, such as when
Human creatures prove not men;
Horrid visions 'fore us rise,
Things unpleasant to the eyes.

Change of place and change of scene
Add caprice unto this dream;
And we wander far and wide,
Crossing ocean, stemming tide.

Seeing sights so strange and new,
Countries, places, people too;
Seeing hills and mountains high,
Streams and rivers rushing by.

Tugs and steamers on the seas,
Birds and flowers 'mid the breeze;
Reeds and rushes on the sand,
Houses built in foreign lands.

Full of conflict and of strife,
Clamoring, shouting, "Such is life!"
Pushing, crowding, can be seen.
Isn't it an awful dream?

Will this tumult ever cease?
Shall we ever dwell in peace?
Will these visions ever end?
Shall our waking hours descend?

Yes, a change must come some day,
And 'tis not so far away,
When this lively dream shall pass,
And our troubles cease at last.

Yes, we'll wake up by and by
In the land beyond the sky;
In that country bright and fair,
Free from sorrow, free from care.

Life is but a fleeting dream,
Full of ever-changing scenes;
Full of conflict and of strife,
Clamoring, shouting, "Such is life!"

"Tell me, tell me, ere we part,
Love you me? have I your heart?"

SPEAK.

Who's who, pretty Miss?
What's what? Tell me this:
Who is ever in your eye?
Who is it for whom you sigh?
Tell me, tell me,
Ere I die,
Is it he, or is it I?

Why, why, pretty Miss?
How, how? Tell me this:
Can you keep us two in mind,
And to each of us be kind?
Tell me, tell me—
I'll resign—
Are you his, or are you mine?

Where, where, pretty Miss?
When, when? Tell me this:
Will you ever speak the word
So it might by him be heard?
Tell me, tell me,
Ere we part,
Love you me, have I your heart?

THE OLD SOLDIERS—LET THEM TALK.

Let the old soldiers talk;
Let them have their way;
Let them tell their tales of strife,
Of battle and array.
Let them tell of victories won,
What noble stands they made,
How other soldiers fled their guns,
But with what grit they stayed.

Let them tell of Gettysburg
And Missionary Ridge,
Of Fredericktown or Chancellorsville,
Of Grant or Breckenridge.
Let them say whate'er they will,
Of fight, of fort, of siege;
Of charging up some rugged hill
And forcing foe to leave.

Let them have their annual meets,
Let them rejoice and sing
The songs of war and camp-fire,
And do 'most anything.
Fling open wide the public doors,
Ope wide the private home,
Give them a hearty welcome,
When in your midst they come.

For they have earned the right,
The best that earth can give,
The right to sing and laugh and joke,
The right to look and live.
Then let the old soldiers talk,
Let them have their way,
A few short years—it won't be long—
Ere they have passed away.

There's not a knee but's bending now;
There's not a head but's gray;
There's not a one but totters
As he plods his weary way;
But they are gay and cheerful,
Do not give up to sighs
As they march in "double-quick" step
To the "roll-call" in the skies.

Then let the old soldiers talk;
Let them have their way;
Let them sing and laugh and joke
And pass the time away.
'Tis ours to love and comfort them,
These few short fleeting years;
'Tis theirs to boast of triumphs grand,
Then—ours to shed the tears.

DANGER TO CHINA.

China! China! What yer doin'?
Fixin' for your 'mediate ruin?
Foolin' with our Uncle Sam
Is a mighty silly plan—
Uncle Sam's a dangerous man.

Shut within your mighty wall,
Secure, you think, from any fall,
Don't deceive your little clan;
You will lose 'most every man,
Monkeyin' with our Uncle Sam.

'Pears to me you'd better mind;
There are other games to find,
'Stead of teasin' Uncle Sam
Stop it, Stop it, yes you can.
Uncle Sam's a dangerous man.

TIME THE HEALER.

There's a cure for lowness of spirit,
  A mover of many ills
Which seem at first as mountains,
  But are really only hills.

To the strong 'tis a great consolation
  To know of this healer divine,
This curer of ills and shortcomings,
  This doctor—your doctor and mine.

His balm, if we'll only take it,
  Have patience and power to wait,
Will smooth o'er all our troubles
  And cover all our mistakes.

Have you ever thought about it—
  This healer of wounds divine,
This curer of ills and sorrows,
  This wonderful balm of time?

No matter how chagrined the feeling,
  No matter how gross the misdeed,
Time has a great cure for trouble,
  A balm which we all most need.

DEEDS SUPERLATIVE.

The sweetest song that e'er was sung,
The sweetest tune that e'er was played,
The sweetest word that e'er was said,
The sweetest speech that e'er was made,
Was sung, was played,
Was said, was made,
By Mother.

The greatest wrath that e'er was 'peased
The greatest pain that e'er was eased,
The greatest sorrow that e'er was ceased,
The deepest wound that e'er was healed,
Was 'peased, was eased,
Was ceased, was hea'ed,
By Mother.

The happiest days that e'er were spent,
The sweetest hours that time e er lent,
The brightest light that sun e'er gave,
Or moon or stars o'er mortals shed,
Were spent, were lent,
Were giv'n, were shed,
Near Mother.

CLASS POEM.

O rock-ribb'd hill! O school sublime!
What purpose is our own?
Is it thy weary steeps to climb,
In search of things unknown?

In search of things, I say,
To human mind or soul
To unfold life's uncertain way,
And view our unknown goal?

What purpose has this sacred hall,
Wherein we now have met?
Unless we heed our Master's call,
To pay in praise and work our debt.

O rock-ribb'd hill! O school sublime!
This is our purpose grand,
While long and weary we may climb:
To meet the world's demand.

L. M. SHACKELFORD.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

"Seeking the Best," by Otis M. Shackelford, is a book written by a Missouri Negro that contains much sober reflection by a young writer who has the courage to look squarely and deeply into the Negro question.

The appeal that goes up from the pages of the book is sound. Otis M. Shackelford believes in the Negro making an effort for the moral betterment of his people. He believes that this movement should be from the inward instead of from the outword. He believes in the possibility of an intellectual and moral evolution.

With Tennyson he can hope for his own race:

"I hold this truth with him who sings,
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping stones,
Of their dead selves to higher things."

In many pages the book is marked by observation and shrewd common sense.—*The Kansas City Post.*

Every Negro in the West should have in his

home a copy of "Seeking the Best" and white men who want to know something of the race's literary ability should read his book.—*The Kansas City Sun.*

"Seeking the Best," is the production of the brain of Otis M. Shackelford, a Negro, and is a literary work of merit.

In it Mr. Shackelford seeks to inspire the youth of his own race that there is something in life for them to aspire to, and urges them by his own experience to strive to raise themselves above the conditions of the average man. He has an easy flow of language, and his book is interesting not only to his own people, but the reading public.

His "verse" is above the average.—*Coffeyville Herald.*

In this book Shackelford has published the story of his life and travels, and also a number of his poems, for he has poetical aspirations also. Throughout the entire book the author deals with the uplifting of the members of his race, and his intention is to inspire them with higher ideals and loftier thoughts. He gives advice along lines which if followed would raise the race to higher education and knowledge—*The University Missourian.*

Of special interest is the verse which forms the second section of the book. An extended poem in the metre of "Hiawatha" is an ambitious effort and is entitled "Bits of History in Verse." It contains lines of sincere poetic feeling and the versification is very generally accurate. Mere technical defects are to be found in most poems but the lofty and earnest purpose of the author of this volume, to encourage and inspire the people of his race, amply atones for any such to be found in his book. A number of miscellaneous poems, all bearing on some phase of the Negro problem or the history of the race, conclude the volume. Several helpful essays are scattered through the book, which is well worthy of careful persual by all members of the Negro race and by the general public as well."—*The Kansas City Journal.*

"Seeking the Best" is the title of a volume of autobiography, verse and essays recently published by Otis M. Shackelford, a Kansas City Negro of unusual attainments. The spirit of the work is self-respecting and its purpose is to stimulate the youth of the author's race into worthy endeavor. In the first part of the volume the experience of the writer in childhood and in gaining an education and making a living are inter-

estingly told. In the pages devoted to verse is an historical narrative poem of much real merit, reciting the progress of the Negro from slavery to citizenship. The verse form is that of Longfellow's "Hiawatha" and the language is simple, straightforward and unpretentious. Essays and shorter poems complete the book, which is sold by subscription by the author himself."—*The Kansas City Star.*

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